The AMERICAN REVIEW

VOLUME EIGHT NUMBER FOUR

FEBRUARY 1937

Howard Odum and the Sociological Proteus

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At midday Proteus rose from the sea, and slept in the shade of the rocks, with the monsters of the deep lying around him. Anyone wishing to learn futurity from him was obliged to catch hold of him at that time: as soon as he was seized, he assumed every possible shape, in order to escape the necessity of prophesying, but whenever he saw that his endeavors were of no avail, he resumed his usual form, and told the truth.—Blakeney's *Smaller Classical Dictionary*.

SOCIOLOGY is a popular method of truth-seeking today. And yet one would think it an unfavorable time for sociologizing. The fundamentals of sociology have much to do with the study of primitive and stable forms of society. Our society is changing so rapidly that one can hardly find in it the moment of repose when just observations can be made. The sociological truth-seeker is like the man in the old Greek fable who comes to ask questions of Proteus. He must know what grip to use, and must hold on firmly

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through all manner of transformations. Then at last he may come upon some Protean wisdom, ancient as the sea.

A Southern sociologist like Mr. Arthur Raper, to whom I referred in a preceding article,* obviously did not hold Proteus long enough. As soon as the old man of the sea took on an African cast, and said something about small ownership for Negro tenants, Mr. Raper let go, and so was greatly deceived. That is no way to get an answer to the famous question: "Is it true what they say about Dixie?" But the militant school of sociology, to which Mr. Raper belongs, is generally content with easy answers.

There is a moderate school of Southern sociology which has chosen the most difficult and trying way to get an answer. It has been at grips with Proteus for a good many years, and last year, in Howard Odum's *Southern Regions*, it gave the public an opportunity to know what look into Southern futurity it had obtained.† The book was widely and favorably reviewed, though not, I think, always with full understanding of what it signified. It is the text here for a discussion of a sociologist, or a group of sociologists, who can be studied in broad contrast to Mr. Raper. There is no fanaticism in this book, no special pleading, no carelessness in handling facts. Rather there is the tortoise-like plodding that we expect of a conscientious social scientist. For we do not want the Southern sociologist to be a volatile and cunning Br'er

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* "A Sociologist in Eden", THE AMERICAN REVIEW, Dec., 1936.

† SOUTHERN REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES *by Howard W. Odum* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. 664 pp. $4.00).

Rabbit. We prefer him to be a Br'er Turtle, even if he does not arrive with utmost briskness.

The book bears Mr. Odum's name, and I am led to suppose, from the peculiar rhetoric recognizable on many a page as belonging to Mr. Odum's very personal prose style, that he is the author of the greater part of the textual wording. But the book represents the concerted effort of many hands and heads. *Southern Regions* appears under the sponsorship of the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council. It is a part of a general regional study which has been going on for some time and which has necessitated large and complicated tasks of research. The informed reader of Mr. Odum's acknowledgements recognizes, as belonging to the advisory and working staff, the names of various eminent social scientists: Rupert Vance, author of *Human Geography of the South*; T. J. Woofter, population expert; S. H. Hobbs, Jr., of North Carolina; Katherine Jocher, of *Social Forces*; George Fort Milton, historian and newspaper editor; E. W. Knight, specialist in education; and more than fifty others. I take it that these people were, in effect, collaborators in the project. To them and their assistants we owe the three hundred or more maps and charts contained in the volume, and much other material. But besides this single book we are to understand that such separate studies as *The South Looks at Its Past*, by A. M. Arnett and Benjamin B. Kendrick, and other books still to be issued are to be considered related parts of the general project.

In the background, too, we should not fail to visualize the aggressive leadership of North Carolina thought in the South during recent years, with the University as a center of radiation for ideas that began by being liberal and have swung more and more toward the Left position of Southern thought. We should not forget the vigorous press of the university and the symposium, *Culture in the South*, edited by W. T. Couch, the director of the press. And beyond all these we should recall the numerous productions of many individual authors, not the least fecund of whom has been Mr. Odum himself.

There are serious criticisms which might be brought against the North Carolina school, but they would not be appropriate here. *Southern Regions* is, in fact, surprisingly free from the agitating and crusading spirit that has animated many of the North Carolinians. No pains have been spared to make it judicious and temperate. It must be taken as the realization of an ambitious design to utilize the complete resources of social science in drawing a picture, in full perspective, of the Southern situation. For the South it proposes to do, perhaps with greater clarity and point, what *Recent Social Trends* aimed to do for the nation. Inevitably it has greater point because in the South a little margin of change, one way or the other, may spell more tragic defeat or more encouraging victory than in any other region. The pages of this book are calm, but it takes only a little reading between the lines to sense an air of tension and indeed desperation. Destiny is long overdue in the South. Its decision for better or for worse hangs by a thread. Mr. Odum and his collaborators would forestall the choice of emotionalism or political expediency by offering the opportunity of rational action before it is too late — before the Stowes, Lincolns, and John Browns of 1937, and their Southern antagonists, have made rational action difficult. Certainly Mr. Odum is making it hard for any responsible American, with this book before him, to say, as might have been said at some times in the past, that he would have chosen differently for the South if he had been better informed.

Unlike the elusive Mr. Raper, Mr. Odum makes it plain, even to the point of laboriousness, what his approach to the general problem is and what his standards of measurement are. There is comparatively little shifting about between pragmatic and humanitarian points of view. Basic to the study (as Mr. Odum is fond of saying) is an elaborate conception of regionalism, founded chiefly upon cultural, economic, and physiographic data. The South is no longer to be considered a solid entity embracing the states which seceded and their border sisters. The states of the Southwest have differentiated themselves off into a new region. The Old South has thus split, Mr. Odum holds, into a Southeast and a Southwest. These are two of the six "major" regions of the United States, the others being the Northeast, the Middle States, the Northwest, and the Far West. It is also "basic" to Mr. Odum's conception that regionalism is here to stay, as an increasingly important factor in government and economics.

In a lengthy chapter entitled "A New Regional Analysis: Southern Regions in the National Picture", Mr. Odum distinguishes carefully, almost pleadingly, between the new regionalism and the old sectionalism. National culture and regional culture, he holds, are complementary and not antagonistic: "For just as it is not possible to understand or plan for the next period of American development without a vivid sensing of great regional differences, so it is not possible to attain superior regional achievements without a very realistic sensing of national unity and culture." This rather loving and pliable version of regionalism is necessary, as will appear later, to certain solutions of regional problems advocated in this book.

Next, the Southeast is not only one region, but many regions, or subregions. The Southeast is clearly a major region, but one does not get a complete picture of it until he has delimited and described the various subregions. In fact, the great diversity of the Southeast, in topography, folk-culture, economic predilection, is one of the principal marks that distinguish it from other major regions.

For both the major regions and the subregions (though more often for the former) Mr. Odum gives the "indices" by which he arrives at his judgement. There is no hidden bias to search out, as in Mr. Raper's *Preface to Peasantry*. We may or may not accept Mr. Odum's "indices", but at any rate they are honestly and openly set forth. For the most part they are comparisons between the Southeast and other regions in items where statistics are obtainable: ownership of automobiles, tax rates, property values, church membership, industrial and agricultural production, income and wages, and countless other things.

But Mr. Odum, who is surely the most amiable and least dogmatic of sociologists, is quick to say that such indices are to be scanned mainly for purposes of "differentiation". They should not imply "imitation, equalization, or standardization". There are other, more intangible, values that no index can measure. There is a "quality civilization" to be sought out in a quantity world. "The mechanized perfections of light and heat", he writes, almost in "agrarian" terms, "moving pictures, and automobiles of the new industrial economy, may not rank higher than the vigorous satisfaction of the mountain folk, deep in the living experience of their music and liberty." The general social inventory, if it rests merely upon "arbitrary comparative indices", may "fall short of either scientific accuracy or practical application to living society".

The Southern picture that emerges slowly from the mass of assembled details is in outline familiar. *Southern Regions* confirms what we already knew or guessed was true. The South is an overwhelmingly, invincibly agrarian area, caught helplessly between its own dimly understood and still living past and the demands of an assertive, recklessly exploitative nation that, under Northeastern leadership, has committed itself rather deeply to an urban, industrial vision of the future. This is the way Mr. Odum sums it up: "As to resources – superabundance; as to science, skills, technology, organization – deficiency; as to general economy – waste; as to culture – richness, with immaturity and multiple handicaps; as to trends – hesitancy and relative retrogression in many aspects of culture."

All this has often been said before, sometimes in scornful depreciation, sometimes in defense. But *Southern Regions* performs the great service of completing and extending the outline, or even of establishing it where it depended on opinion and conjecture. It may be true that sociology here, as in many another case, simply proves what common-sense persons already knew. But in our violently statistical, researching age, it is extremely useful to have on hand several bales of data to feed the asses. Those particular asses who have argued that the South has refused to put itself in order only because of some blind and wicked infatuation with false gods are here refuted. They will find in *Southern Regions* all the proof they want, gathered by forward-looking scientists, that their diagnosis is ridiculously wrong.

But what will now happen to their vituperative vocabulary? You cannot accuse a page of statistics of being nostalgic. There is no Jahveh-worship in a chart of taxation figures. It is impossible to charge Mr. Odum with renewing the Civil War when he points out that the per capita farm income for New York state in 1929 was $493, while in Tennessee it was $137. Yet no doubt they will have a verbal shillelagh ready. They will probably call Mr. Odum a Fascist!

Among the many indices of measurement, I think by far the most enlightening are those which emphasize what Mr. Odum calls "deficiency". He does not add, as some Southerners would want to add, that this deficiency also means dependency, almost to the point of enslavement. He also neglects to point out that the disparity between the South and other regions (particularly the Northeast) shows no tendency to lessen. One can hardly go through the book, however, without getting the impression that the relative material condition of the South today may be a good deal worse than it was in 1900, when the region had had time to recover from war and reconstruction and had not yet entered fully upon the program of industrialization and progress then being urged upon it by Walter H. Page and Henry Grady. It is a fault in Mr. Odum's indices that they do not clearly set up such long range comparisons. Nevertheless, it can definitely be said that, after a full generation of the Grady-Page program, the South is still tragically deficient in the very blessings that those prophets guaranteed as the result of their program.

Occasionally Mr. Odum summarizes parts of his deficiency studies. By way of opening the exhibit I quote from one of his summaries:

> Some of the actual measures of this waste and lack of technology are found in deficiency indices, such as the lowest per capita farm income, the lowest income per worker, the lowest return per unit of horse power, the lowest ratio of income from livestock production, the lowest per capita purebred livestock, the lowest production of milk and dairy products, a low ratio of pasture land, a low carrying capacity for pasture lands. . . . There has been a decrease in the last decade of the number of most livestock. There is a low evaluation of livestock and a low evaluation of their products.

But the story of Southern deficiency means something more than "waste and lack of technology". Not even the finest technology, not the most earnest conservation can save a region from ruinous exploitation at the hands of a political-economic imperialism such as the South has had to face. In my opinion, the following statistics are a measure of such exploitation fully as much as of Southern waste and inexpertness.

In ratio of tenancy to ownership, nine Southern states rank in the fourth, or heaviest, quartile; two other Southern states rank in the third quartile. And Southern tenancy has been on the increase.

Nine of the Southern states rank lowest in land value in the Union. The lowest land value in tenant-operated farms is in the South.

The density of population is about sixty to the square mile in the South as compared to eighty and over in the Northwestern and Middle States. This figure has great significance in any interpretation of the agrarian South, for its bearing on taxation and government, if for no other reason.

The average gross income per farm, in 1924-28, was under $1500 a year in all Southern states except Florida, Texas and Oklahoma. In New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin the income was $2000 to $3000 a year.

Wages average about one third less in the Southeast than in the Northeast, and are more than one third less than in the Middle States.

In 1929 there were less than 175 motor cars per 1000 inhabitants in all Southern states except Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida, as compared with 175 to 225 in the Northeast and over 275 in the Middle West.

The average total acreage per farm in the Southeast is the smallest in the country: under 75 acres. In the Middle West it is 300 and over. The Southeast has 175 million acres in farm lands as compared with 60 million in the Northeast.

The South lies in the belt of the most serious erosion. Of the nation's total of 150 million eroded acres, 97 million are in the South.

The Southeast buys 59.5 per cent of all the fertilizer bought in the nation. The Northeast buys 12.3 per cent; the Middle States 19.8 per cent.

The agricultural expenses of the Southeast are distributed in about the following proportion: for fertilizer, 41 per cent; for feed, 27 per cent; for labor, 32 per cent. In the rest of the United States the distribution is: for fertilizer, 6.3 per cent; for feed, 46.4 per cent; for labor, 47.3 per cent.

Less than ten per cent of Southern farms use tractors.

The value of all farm property was under $5000 per farm in the Southeast as compared with $10,000 to $15,000 in New York state, and over $15,000 in much of the Middle West. The figures are for 1930.

To illustrate per capita farm income in 1929 the following figures may be selected: for the Southeast, $183; for the Northeast, $366; for the Middle States, $262; for Tennessee, $137; for Massachusetts, $898; for New York, $493.

Non-farm income makes a slightly better relative showing. Some figures are: for the Southeast, $535; for the Northeast, $683; for the Middle States, $854. Tennessee's per capita non-farm income figures out as $529 in comparison with New York's $1417.

The average Federal income tax paid in the Southeast in 1928 was about half of the average tax paid in the Northeast.

In interstate migration since 1900 the heaviest net loss was in the South: 3,400,000. Mr. Odum makes the following comment upon this loss:

> Among these [migrating Southerners] was a large ratio of its best equipped workers, educators, and scientists.

This is reflected in the negligible part which the South has in nearly all national organizations and agencies of science, education, and social welfare, and in positions of leadership in national affairs other than current politics. The measure of the region's leadership is considerably less than 5 per cent as compared with its approximately 21 per cent of population, 17 per cent of area, and 12 per cent of wealth. In the great majority of the dominant national groups the southern representation on the executive or controlling boards is negligible. *The same is true in most of the New Deal units of administration in contrast to the large representation in Congress.* (Italics are mine.)

In the greater part of the South more than forty per cent of the population live on farms, as compared with less than ten per cent in the Northeast (Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine excepted).

Only a complex description can make clear the extent of educational deficiencies and burdens. On top of the extra expense of its bi-racial school system, the South has "the largest proportion of children of school age to the total population alongside the smallest income and wealth with which to educate them. Thus the burden of supporting schools on a property tax in a poor state with a large ratio of children may be more than ten times as heavy as for a rich state with fewer children." Some figures will make the situation plain. Mississippi, with about 47 per cent of its population of school age in 1930, had 23.5 of its total population in school. Its per capita net income in 1929 was $32; its total expenditures per capita for schools in 1927-28 were $9.04; of all its income it spent 4 per cent on schools. New York, with about 34 per cent of its population of school age, had 19 per cent of its total population in school; had $506 per capita net income; spent $23.86 per capita of its total expenditures for school, or 2.11 per cent of its total income.

To this melancholy contrast we might add a bit of interpretation by Mr. Rupert Vance: "For Mississippi to attain the national average in expenditures for educating her school children would require 99.3 per cent of all the present tax monies of the state."

The average annual teachers' salary in Georgia is reckoned at $546 as compared with California's $2,337.

The per capita total receipts of universities, colleges, and professional schools in Arkansas and Alabama (the two lowest states in the Union on this scale) was $1.31 and $1.95 respectively, in comparison with Connecticut's $9.08 and Massachusett's $8.13 (the two highest states).

Mr. Odum sums this up by saying:

> The stark reality of regional dilemma here may be illustrated by a continuation of the educational picture in which the Southeast is shown to have increased its index of educational expenditures from something like 300 in 1900 to an analogous 6,000 in 1930, yet, in order to bring its standards up to the best of the nation, must double its current annual expenditures and approximate a third of its taxable income for education. More and still more grows the demand; less and still less seem the relative tangible liquid resources, under the present economy.

It is in such passages as the above that one catches the accents of desperation. For nearly a half century the South has been listening to progressive educationalists and trying to catch up in the educational race. It has made entirely creditable gains at a few points.

But in general it seems farther behind than it was before 1860, when the South had already founded almost as many permanent state universities and women's colleges as had been founded in *all the rest of the nation.* It has nearly exhausted itself to set up a modern educational establishment, and yet still it lags, and now sees, furthermore, that the system built up at so much cost is threatened by general economic depletion.

But another, even sadder, tale of effort and exhaustion appears in the tables of tax increases, which have gone, not only to support schools, but to build roads and to finance larger and more modern forms of state and county government.

Southern states, which are at the bottom of the national list in income, in land values, in all sorts of other tangibles, are at the top of the list in tax increases since 1913. The ratios of increase for the six regions of the United States are as follows: Southeast, 307.5 per cent; Southwest, 281.9 per cent; Northeast, 222.3 per cent; Middle States, 232.4 per cent; Northwest, 203; Far West, 158.2. For some individual states, let North Carolina's 553.8 per cent tax increase be set beside New York's 216.4 per cent; Mississippi's 411.4 beside Ohio's 212 per cent; South Carolina's 448.2 per cent beside North Dakota's 183.4 per cent.

With the tale of tax increase must go the tale of increase in the indebtedness of state governments. Four Southern states rank among the five highest in the nation in such indebtedness. The per capita indebtedness for the Southeast is $23.48 as compared with the Northeast's $15.98 and the Middle States' $11.44. In farm mortgages, however, the Southeast was less heavily loaded than some other regions. Nevertheless, mortgages belong in the debt picture. In a certain year one Southeastern Federal land bank owned over a million acres and operated four thousand farms in three Southeastern states.

The matter of mortgages suggests to us how incomplete the picture is unless we have figures to show the South's "unfavorable trade balance". I do not find such figures in this book. I find two sentences introduced to justify Mr. Odum's argument that a certain amount of large-scale industry is desirable. "The Southeast being a heavily loaded debtor region faces an unusually adverse trade balance", he writes, "it not only does not have adequate opportunity for earning, but its money, hard earned, flows out and out to enrich other regions, often contrary to its economic advantages and diminishing the income and purchasing power of the people." Elsewhere he speaks a little more vehemently of the Southern farmer's plight:

> How was he to pay debts which had more than doubled in an economy in which his income had been cut more than half? . . . And all the while urban intellectuals demanding a "standard of living" . . . which required more and more outlay for automobiles, telephones, radios, and other technologies which had come to signify blanket indices of well-being.

It is a pity that Mr. Odum did not expand the point. It would be interesting to know how much of every Northeastern dollar expended in the South or for Southern produce flows back eventually into the Northeast; and how much of every Southern dollar (not only of the Southern farmer's dollar) goes Northeast without ever returning to the Southern purse. It would round off the tale of deficiency to show how, while all but bankrupting itself in its effort to duplicate Northeastern material and cultural arrangements, the South was simultaneously making a heavy contribution to the Northeastern establishment. In the educational field, this would mean that North Carolina not only supported its own state schools and colleges (bi-racial and other duplicating establishments extra), but also assisted Harvard University to install its new house-system, to say nothing of swelling the Harvard endowment and doing its bit for Boston on the side. And what did fair Harvard and the state of Massachusetts contribute to North Carolina? Little, compared with what they took away. And what bore heavily on comparatively wealthy (as Southern states go) North Carolina meant extreme debility for comparatively poor Mississippi and Arkansas.

Yet I can well understand Mr. Odum's reluctance to go thoroughly into such questions. They raise the sectional issue in its most discouraging and angry form. And Mr. Odum wants to be amiable and politic. He is a regionalist, not a sectionalist. Very well, the tale is grievous enough without statistics written in blood. It is sufficiently emphatic to have evidence, from the "sampling" I have done, that expert students of a sociological condition, aiming at completeness and working in all honesty, have not been able to explain Southern "backwardness" merely as a product of social attitudes, environment, and traditions. Those have their due place, and it is an important place. But sociology is trafficking in dangerous nonsense unless, as in *Southern Regions*, it takes up the economic issue.

There is more, vastly more, in Mr. Odum's account to roll up the tale of Southern disadvantage. There is also much to say of possibilities, some few realized, others still far from realization. It all comes to this: the South's position, relative to other regions, is one of colonial degradation. In emphasizing that point, boldly and conclusively, Mr. Odum and his collaborators stand quite apart from some of their more partial contemporaries. They have met the test which distinguishes statecraft from charlatanry in the application of social science. By contrast, Mr. Arthur Raper of the militant school, debunkers like Mr. H. L. Mencken and Mr. Gerald Johnson, and puzzled liberals like Mr. Virginius Dabney have all miserably flunked the examination. These latter do not understand, or else wilfully ignore, the first principles of consideration. They damn the South for not repairing its deficiencies; and by way of a tonic they offer another swig of the patent medicine that has been costly without being curative. They do not know, or do not care to know, that the debtor South, already ravaged by its creditors, cannot, out of its limited substance, pay for modern improvements and at the same time maintain its creditors in luxury.

But how have Mr. Odum and his colleagues managed to grasp the first principles that eluded these other able heads? The answer is implicit in the title of the book: *Southern Regions.* Once Mr. Odum and his colleagues committed themselves to a regional study, once they recognized "the historical and theoretical significance of the region and of the power of the folk-regional society in modern culture", it was inevitable that their studies would bring them face to face with the South's historic difficulty – though of course it took some salty good sense and no little courage in the process. By a devious, perhaps an unnecessarily arduous route, they have arrived upon the ground where John C. Calhoun began to do some hard thinking about a century ago. Their program differs from Calhoun's, but the thesis in many ways is the same. The South, *because of* its regional differentiations, some of which are certainly valuable, is at a disadvantage, and so long as political and economic power dwells where it long has dwelt, it will continue to be at a disadvantage.

It is important to realize, as I think Mr. Odum does, that the regional differentiations are among the principal causes, if they alone are not the chief cause, of the disadvantage. But if you are an abstract nationalist, or, as folks long ago used to say, a leveller, you are certain to miss this point. If you look at New York and then look at Georgia, and see that the former is more or less orderly and shipshape after a modern manner, and that the latter is disorderly and shabby, after a strange mixture of modern and ancient manners, you will never be able to conclude, unless you are a regionalist, that the disorderliness of Georgia is anything but a quaint or an annoying exhibition of human depravity. Depravity, I believe, was the chief text of Mr. Mencken's old pulpit thunderings against the South. It is also Mr. Raper's text, but he is, as Mr. Mencken really never was, an eager missionary, who will take his chances of getting popped into the cannibal pot if, with the Great White Father's bureaus at his back, he can proselyte the Southern savages.

In this connection, I recall the attempt of *The American Mercury*, some years ago, to determine the relative degree of "civilization" in the states of the Union by using indices somewhat like those in Mr. Odum's book. Of course the Southern states rated lowest in all those indices – such as schools and libraries – which connoted "civilization"; and highest in those – such homicides and malaria – which connoted "barbarism". The findings merely confirmed the prevalent notion of some mysterious and innate depravity in the South. No attempt was made to establish regional groupings or to probe into the causes of regional differences. Nobody added up the figures and asked whether the remarkable surplus of libraries in the Northeast could possibly have anything to do with the lack of them in the Southeast. Nobody wondered whether a certain kind of valid cultural preference might be tied up with the economic unbalance: the kind of preference that would make a Georgia cracker want to spend an extra quarter on ammunition to shoot squirrels rather than on a copy of *The New Yorker.*

Surely the good sociologist must be a regionalist, and all the more so if he unites other social scientists under his banner and goes into action. Only through a regional study can he get at a culture from the inside. If he comes at it with loud talk about humanity and world progress, he is coming at it from the outside, he is a missionary and not a seeker after truth. The regional grip is the right one, and the only right one, for the sociological Proteus. Held in that grip, Proteus ceases to bewilder and begins to say what is to be done in this or that agitated corner. And then one can also think, or begin to think, about that unholy mess of regions which is the world. It is greatly to the credit of Mr. Odum and his colleagues that they have kept a regional grip upon one of the most slippery of subjects.

Yet I should not want to overemphasize their devotion to the economic side of Southern regional problems. On the whole *Southern Regions* does not seem to be grounded upon crass economic determinism. Mr. Odum does not say that everything will be perfect if only economic deficiencies may somehow be remedied. He does not say that the South ought to be made over into a North, or into a Nowhere. As a careful regionalist he can foresee obstacles to any such thoroughgoing transformation and I gather that he would not be too forward about eliminating all those obstacles. He writes:

> The character and power of the total regional culture is, of course, the key to the whole problem of appraising and reintegrating the southern culture into the national unity . . . What is not measurable is the degree to which the present regional homogeneity, due to whatever factors of folk-regional forces, has become sufficiently stable to constitute itself a fixed culture non-assimilable and not adapted to the national mode of industry, commerce, and technology.

That is heavy language to say, as Stark Young said in *I'll Take My Stand*, that the South changing will still be the South. To supply the modern economic means of straightening-up Southern affairs will not necessarily mean that the South will adopt the attitudes that go with such economic means elsewhere. By present indications, Mr. Odum notes, "folkways of race, state, and sectional loyalties" may come nearer to "conditioning" the South, even a more modern

South, than may any other forces. Education, which is the most powerful of "conditioning" forces, "reflects far more of the effect of politics, religion, and sectionalism than it appears as modifying influences upon them". Faculty members of Southern universities may have been trained in Eastern or Western institutions, may even themselves be non-Southern, yet they are more often "conditioned" by Southern culture than they modify it. The common-school system, which has imitated the form and mechanics of the national system, does not appear to have much visible effect upon the Southern culture. Denominational colleges and some teacher-training institutions are citadels of sectional conservatism.

> The strength and integrity of the southern culture have been more and more articulate as the ratio of southern men and women trained in other institutions and returning to major posts in southern colleges has increased to take the place of natives of other regions originally employed. This together with other factors, such as a revolt against industrialism, technology, and cities; the romanticizing of the old southern culture; the experience of northern capitalists in southern industry; the attempt of northern idealists and reformers to coerce the region; the experience of the Negro in the North and West; and a certain revivification of sectional antagonisms have contributed to an apparent solidifying of the regional culture.

Mr. Odum is certain that the Southern culture, far from being "decadent", is in reality to be called "immature". It has enormous vitality, even in those attitudes which sociologists call survivals: its ways of humor, its "stubborn bantering threats to outsiders", and various "defense mechanisms". Though a little vaguely, Mr. Odum suggests that the process of improving Southern conditions is not merely one of bringing the South "up" to modern standards, but of making modern standards worth acceptance by the South. He likes the "exuberant vigor" even of those whom the metropolitan press has rated as demagogues, and quotes, as a specimen voice of the one and the many in the Southern regions, these words spoken in the United States Senate by the late Huey Long:

> I am not undertaking to answer the charge that I am ignorant. It is true. I am an ignorant man. I have had no college education. I have not even had a high school education. But the thing that takes me far in politics is that I do not have to color what comes into my mind and into my heart. I say it unvarnished. I say it without veneer. I have not the learning to do otherwise, and therefore my ignorance is often not detected. I know the hearts of the people because I have not colored my own. I know when I am right in my own conscience. I do not talk one way in the cloakroom and another way out here. I do not talk one way back there in the hills of Louisiana and another way here in the Senate. I have one language. Ignorant as it is, it is the universal language within the sphere in which I operate. Its simplicity gains pardon for my lack of letters and education.

Thus, in spite of much emphasis upon economics, *Southern Regions* is far from giving comfort to those who, like Mr. Arthur Raper, would make too-simple prescriptions: who offer education to cure "ignorance" and "prejudice"; factories to cure poverty; and more and bigger laws, bureaus, and governments to do away with social "injustice". Confronted with a specific major problem, whether it be the handling of industry, the character of education, the race issue, the preservation of agriculture, Mr. Odum seems to insist that the particular problem cannot be dealt with in isolation from other problems. Furthermore, all such major problems from farm tenancy to political democracy are "bound up with the 'culture' or 'system' of economic and social ideologies and arrangements of the region". Mr. Odum holds that the strategy of "mass attack upon the culture of a whole region" is neither common sense nor science. Although he edges dangerously near to Mr. Raper's views when he says that the Negro's future is "an American problem of development and assimilation", he does not prescribe that the assimilation must be Southern. There is little of Mr. Raper's bald equalitarianism. It is significant that the Negro problem does not rate a single specialized chapter in the book but is dealt with, as it arises, in connection with more general problems. To top all, we have this matter-of-fact statement: "Any realistic picture of the region or programs of action must assume the Negro to be exactly what he is in the regional fabric." There is to be no sociological wish-thinking.

At this point, however, it seems proper to ask who can speak authoritatively for the Southern Regional Study. For Mr. Rupert Vance, who has shared in the study, has made an entirely different interpretation. In a pamphlet, *The South and the Nation*, prepared by Mr. Vance on the basis of the Southern Regional Study, I find a paragraph of pure economic determinism:

> It is the belief of the Southern Regional Study that

prejudices inherent in Southern culture will respond best to economic treatment. In so far as they are the products of fear, of ignorance, of the search for the scapegoats of misery, they are the products of poverty. To raise the economic conditions of the common men of the South, black and white, is to do the most possible to lessen hatred, prejudice, and conflict.

Here we are close to certain popular sociologisms, such as the myth that economic jealousy is the cause of lynching, or Mr. Raper's myth, in *Preface to Peasantry*, that Southern planters have oppressed the Negro because they had to find a scapegoat. But Mr. Vance's statement seems contrary both to the spirit and the general argument of *Southern Regions*. I have been unable to locate any specific passages in the book which might be taken as a foundation for this "belief". Possibly Mr. Vance is making some independent interpretation; possibly he is spreading out a little bait. But if the Southern Regional Committee do "believe" what Mr. Vance says they believe, they are going against the regionalism of *Southern Regions* and are, in this respect, no more regional than the Atlanta office of the Standard Oil Company.

What futurity does the sociological Proteus foretell for the South? That appears, after 576 pages of shifting consideration, in the chapter entitled "Towards Regional Planning". Here we may see why Mr. Odum was so insistent, at the outset, that regionalism must be carefully distinguished from sectionalism. His proposals for reconstruction, which we may take to represent the official view of the Southern Regional Study, rest upon two assumptions: first, that the states of the South, or at least of the Southeast, can be persuaded to get together on a long-time, intra-Southeastern experiment in regional coöperation, which after an initial period of trial and study will finally begin to function, as a social plan, about 1950; and second, that the money needed for repairing Southern deficiencies can be obtained from outside the South, either through Federal appropriations, or business enterprise, or private benevolence.

The two assumptions are bound closely together and have certain unexpressed negative features. The Southern get-together must not have any of the tone and look of the old Southern Confederacy; there must not be any "secesh" elements in it. The external assistance must not look to the nation like a piratical raid upon the Federal treasury, or to the South like some kind of humiliating almsgiving or bribery. It takes some delicate balancing and word-play to get all such difficulties skirted. Mr. Odum accomplishes it by his dogma that the nation and the regions are reciprocal aspects of the same good principle, non-conflciting, mutually supporting. The nation helps itself by helping the South. The South helps itself by being national-minded. A great deal of forbearance and patience is implied here – more than has so far been exhibited in American history. But Mr. Odum is hopeful.

Yet he is also a little fearful. There are those disturbing Texans who bumptiously declare that the Southwest is "free soil" commercially, not to be dictated to or planned for by anybody, outside its own Chambers of Commerce. Mr. Odum sweetly reminds these people that under the land rental scheme of the Triple-A, Texas received more than half of all that was paid to other states. There are also meddlesome persons from God knows where who want to foist off upon the South "immature experiments or inferior goods or adventurous misfits from the metropolis"; and there is a quarrelsome group of people who indulge in "intolerant reform propaganda" or put exaggerated hope in "humanism, technocracy, self-contained America . . . narrow regimentation . . . or in many of the New Deal plans which ignored regional reality". To such persons Mr. Odum gently remarks (I translate from the sociological) that they had better study regionalism. Last, there is the public suspicion of "national planning", "planned economy", and the like as smacking of utopian idealism, radicalism, supertechnology, dictatorship, and sectional favoritism. He meets this suspicion by arguing that "social planning" is none of those things, but something entirely different.

On this last subject Mr. Odum is none too definite. Apparently social planning means that everybody will stop fighting, cheating, and vituperating and be a good Christian. It is not dictatorially imposed but calls for "coöperative and coördinated design of, for, and by all institutions and regions rather than by government alone through centralized autocracy". Seemingly that implies that social planning will be in large part voluntary and unofficial, looking to politics for final instrumentation rather than as a source of immediate action. The thing will work amiably and flexibly. It will have as its principle "a working equilibrium in the whole culture process and function". It proposes not to tear down the old institutions forthwith, but to ease them painlessly through some orderly transitional process.

This is enchanting, but it is confusing. We can be sure of one thing only: that the transitional process is going to be extra- or super-political and will be in charge of social science. I interpret Mr. Odum's discourse here to mean that he will, as sociologist, commit himself to stating the major problems and to indicating how agencies may be set up for determining their solution; but that he will not say, dogmatically and immediately, what the solution is.

It appears that out of four principal "clusters of problems" Mr. Odum considers agriculture and its related problems as of first importance, and preparation for educational and technical leadership as of next importance. Presumably there will be a regional-planning board which will do for the entire Southeast – or the South – about what the Tennessee Valley Authority does for the Valley. Through a technique of experimentation this board will demonstrate in selected areas what can be done, say, for the tenant farmer. It will also seek to coördinate the action of established governmental units, state and Federal, and of private agencies. Thus, by working on the lowest economic level it will provide a substantial basis for reform. But it will also work in the upper brackets. In higher education it will encourage regional institutional centers for the training of public servants and technologists and will provide for a pooling of educational resources and a sensible allocation of benevolences and Federal grants. The latter would be a welcome substitute for the present hit or miss system, whereby Southern colleges fight each other first in the home section and then continue the fight abroad, in the waiting-rooms of Northeastern philanthropists.

Above all, perhaps, the planning board will attend to the little matter of a proper "equalization" of Federal funds. The whole thing will work on a series of priority schedules. There will be no grandiose whooping it up and racing against time, but the hope will be to dispose of the preliminary phases in two six-year periods, so that the South will be somewhat patched up and ready for serious planning by 1950. But meanwhile, the South must become aware of the pressing nature of its own dilemmas. The prospect is really alarming; failure to take early action, united action, may mean still further retrogression.

Without attempting to discuss the pros and cons of planning, I shall simply indicate that the crux of the whole matter lies in the problem of securing united action in the South, and secondarily in the problem of securing something like national awareness of the Southern dilemma. But how can the South be awakened to such action? How can the nation be made to understand that blood transfusion must now replace the blood sucking of the last seventy years? Mr. Odum's regionalism stands between the horns of a dilemma that can well be added to his own terrifying list of Southern dilemmas. Only one force has ever drawn the Southern states together for a vast concerted effort, and that is the lusty force of strong sectional feeling. If Mr. Odum, knowing what he knows, were a Huey Long in temperament, the sound-trucks would be on the road tomorrow, to translate the deficiency indices into the language of the "ignorant man". Can the social-science regionalists achieve a unified effort without unleashing the sectional antagonisms that they disclaim? They cannot, unless they can discover some "moral equivalent" for sectional antagonism. It is barely possible that they may do so, if economic security continues to be a popular issue. Doubtless, too, they may do a great deal by a slow and silent process of infiltration – which very likely is what they mean to do.

Even in this last method there are difficulties. The South is sectionally self-conscious, but the active manifestations of that sectionalism are today more often negative and personal than they are affirmative and social. Without realizing what he is doing, the average Southerner in practice often separates his private folkways from his public opinions and actions. For himself as an individual he is responsible; for what goes on in the greater world he is not responsible. After long years of subjection he has learned to take social programs as he takes the weather. They generally come from far away, he is not responsible for them, he will do nothing about them until it is necessary to vote down a child-labor amendment or check a racial-equality movement.

The Southerner might be called Oriental in his tolerance of social movements originating elsewhere, until they begin to intrude upon his English-Scotch notion of private and clan responsibility. Thus he may theoretically approve, or at least not dissent from, a program of higher education for Negroes; but privately he does not for one moment forget that the grandfathers of those Negroes, no matter how highly educated, were his or somebody's grandfather's slaves. And this psychological dualism has other singular ramifications. It allows a singular prestige to some social movements originating outside the South, and no prestige at all to some originating within the South. This situation may be illustrated at the moment by the fact that the newly elected Browning administration in Tennessee, avowedly a reform administration and anxious to do the modern thing right, has recently called into consultation, not Mr. Howard Odum and his friends, but a gentleman from New York, the same who advised another reform administration several years ago and helped to put Tennessee deeply in the red.

Then, to turn to other aspects of the proposal, what assurance can Mr. Odum offer that the other regions will be kindly disposed in the matter of letting some surplus cash go to rebuild the South? How does the Southern Regional Study propose to go about eliminating, or even checking, the numerous extra-regional controls that either own Southern business and agriculture or draw heavy tribute from them? As for getting money, private philanthropy is an unpredictable element. The only way to be sure of a helpful overflow of Northeastern surplus, or national surplus, into the Southern region is to work through the Federal government.

Now, since the South as a single region cannot control Washington, cannot even be sure that a Democratic administration at Washington will not fall into Northeastern hands, its only recourse, short of some new exhibition of Christian spirit in government, would have to be a hardboiled regional alliance with the Western regions. Such alliances, however, imply clearcut issues, political bargains, and a great deal of sectionalism. There is no way out of making terms, if the South is compelled to get a lot of extra money from some foreign source. The South must either play sectional politics, or it must be still a dependent, hoping to receive a bounty on terms that will not be too disagreeable or humiliating – terms that will not endanger the regional differentiation which Mr. Odum avowedly prizes. In a like dilemma Calhoun reluctantly proposed Southern independence. Mr. Odum and his colleagues, troubled with exactly the same general issues, propose a regional-national cooperation and hope for the best. If their plan works it will give the South either some very mild form of regional autonomy or a somewhat more endurable form of regional colonialism.

Perhaps more endurable. With Mr. Odum and his colleagues as the scientific satraps of the newly planned Southern province, I am certain it would be far more endurable than it is at present. But as the Roosevelt administration passes its second inaugural, it is impossible not to be disturbed at certain shadows cast upon the South by figures interposed against the blazing incandescence at Washington. What these mean, we do not know as yet. They do not gesture in Mr. Odum's kindly and catholic manner; they do not have the intellectual brow of Rupert Vance; not any of them carry, tucked away somewhere about their persons, the particular old flag, a corner of which may sometimes be seen protruding from the pocket of Benjamin B. Kendrick. Indeed, the appointment of Mr. W. W. Alexander to head the Resettlement Administration suggests that the militant school of Southern sociologists is in favor at Washington, and that the moderate school is not being called upon either to advise or to administer. Already it was true that while

Mr. Roosevelt depended upon his Southern wheelhorses in Congress to do his political chores, he made practically no appointments to administrative departments and bureaus from the ranks of Southerners. The Tennessee Valley Authority, except for the pick-and-shovel boys and some office workers, has been manned by sociologists and engineers from all parts of the nation outside the South.

It is barely possible, of course, that Mr. W. W. Alexander has received his appointment because of his intimate concern for the Japanese truck-farmers of the Far West, the much-mortgaged Scandinavians of the Middle West, the proliferous Canadian-French of upper New England, and the bog-hoppers and muck-farmers of other commercialized farming regions. But his long and ardent interest in the Negro problem, his connection with the Interracial Commission, his close relation with the Rosenwald Foundation and the buzzing activities of Mr. Julian Embree, would suggest quite the contrary to a Southern observer. It is difficult not to regard this appointment as other than a rebuff to the school of sociological thought represented in *Southern Regions*. One is almost ready to say that the nature of Mr. Odum's dilemma in regional planning is already being illustrated: Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Wallace may have decided that the South is not to have access to Federal power and Federal money except on terms that suit their plans, which, if judged by past performance, are not going to respect the complex regional situation depicted by Mr. Odum.

Yet this is only guessing, after all. Sociology is long, and the years of presidential administrations are fleeting. The picture drawn in *Southern Regions* cannot quickly be erased and forgotten. If our politics are doomed to have a sociological flavor, the South had better get about giving Mr. Odum some support. His way is the best way to go modern under sociological auspices, as Mr. Raper's is the worst possible way. It remains to be seen whether the South will follow Mr. Odum, or submit to Mr. Raper, or conceivably refuse them both.

English Monarchy

The Significance of the Abdication

HILAIRE BELLOC

TO UNDERSTAND what has been rather exaggeratedly called "The Political Crisis" in England – that is, the recent somewhat sensational abdication of the late King Edward VIII – it is essential to understand the historical foundation of the affair. When we know that we shall see both how its immediate importance has, as I say, been exaggerated; and also how its ultimate importance may be considerable.

England like all other European States (with the exception of the merchant republics) was from time immemorial a monarchy. It was governed after the fashion best described as "a popular hereditary monarchy". In this phrase the final term "monarchy" meant real executive government exercized by one man who was responsible for the public acts of the executive and was also the ultimate source of most legislation and of all direct official action. He received and spent all permanent revenues; he commanded; and no one dreamed of questioning the moral right of the office to full government – any more than we question to-day the moral right of the official police to keep order in the streets.

The second term of the phrase, "hereditary", meant that the office passed according to the laws of personal inheritance common to all Christendom, save that in some details such laws were modified by local custom. Roughly speaking, the kingly office, the active government of the state, descended from father to eldest son, or failing a son, from the deceased uncle to the eldest surviving nephew, and in general followed the laws of feudal succession in income derived from dues on land. In some places only males could inherit, in others the daughter of the last monarch would inherit rather than a nephew; and the marriage of such an heiress would change the dynasty. There were other local modifications, but the rough rule of succession was the same as that which governed hereditary property. In some States the will of the last monarch had (where there was doubt) a preponderating effect upon the succession.

There had been no break in this tradition in England since the century after the Conquest.

The last term of the phrase, "popular", meant that the King was deemed to act for the whole people, to incarnate the nation as it were, and also to be responsible to it for his actions, to be limited by custom and by conference with the main organs of society.

That state of affairs, having its origins in the Dark Ages, was in full vigor from the twelfth to the seventeenth century – that is for more than five hundred years, though of course the spirit of the thing and its general character went back centuries before. The power of the monarch, as of all real executive governing power, power to nominate officers or to break them, to grant titles, to receive incomes out of regular public revenue, to make peace and to make war, appeared stronger than ever at the death of the most despotic, but unbalanced, Henry Tudor in 1536.

Now Henry Tudor began without meaning to do so an economic revolution of the highest import. He not only suppressed the monasteries with their great wealth and seized that wealth for the Crown, but he also started the precedent that any collegiate or corporate property might thus be looted, and before the end of his reign his wretchedly unbalanced foreign policy had led him into such expenditure that he had got rid of the looted Church and clerical revenues right and left to private individuals. Some of that wealth he had merely squandered on favorites or people who for the moment dominated his vacillating and easily dominated temper; but the most part was sold in a hurry at very low prices – in general for about half its value.

Of those who got hold of what had once been the revenues of many thousands living a corporate life the majority were the greater and lesser feudal lords, that is, men from the rank of the village squires up to lords of many combined manors, the great feudal houses, such as the Percys and the Howards. A certain appreciable minority were mere adventurers, men who had used their position in the public service to get hold of the newly transferred wealth. Of this sort the so-called "Cromwells", whose real name was Williams, are an excellent example. The whole point of Oliver Cromwell, for instance, was that he was a cadet of one of the new millionaire families made by the new Reformation land settlement.

The economic effect of this vast revolution was *to create a class financially more powerful than the King*, and becoming richer and richer as time proceeded. Those below the squires, the free-hold peasants, were outweighed by the new wealth of the gentry, and what was still graver the economic power of the Crown was outweighed by this new wealth as well. Many accidents combined to aggravate this state of affairs: the value of money changed, the Crown (that is the government, the Monarch) got its revenue from traditional sources in the nominal value of the old money, but had to pay out for services in the real value of the new debased money. For instance, with the money of the time when Henry Tudor was looting the Church and the hospitals and colleges One Pound received by the King in dues would pay for a first-rate horse; a hundred years later during the Civil Wars the Crown would still be getting only a Pound in feudal revenue but would have to pay Six Pounds for a trooper's mount. Then again, there were minorities: that of Edward VI immediately after Henry Tudor, during which the revenues of the Crown were looted wholesale by the men who were successively responsible for Government in the name of the little King. There followed two women, of whom advantage was taken shamelessly – Elizabeth Tudor in particular was during her long reign fleeced unmercifully. She was in the hands of her ministers and their favorites, upon whom she depended for the maintenance of her throne during the most unpopular religious revolution, which had been forced upon the nation in order that the new land-owners might keep their ill-gotten wealth.

The upshot of it was that by the first generation of the seventeenth century, during the reign of James I and the beginning of the Stuart dynasty, the revenues of the Crown had become hopelessly in-sufficient; they had to be supplemented by grants and those grants could be obtained only by voluntary gifts from the wealthy classes, of whom the main committee was the House of Commons, and those classes took every advantage of their position to degrade and ultimately supplant the monarchy.

They succeeded so thoroughly that in the year 1688 they drove out the last legitimate King, James II, and replaced him by a puppet of their own. Though James II's daughters were allowed to call themselves monarchs, all real power had passed to the wealthier classes, that is to the land-owners and the great merchants, of whom the two working committees were the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The free-holding peasantry gradually disappeared, the common lands went the way of all other corporate and collegiate property, and when Anne, the last daughter of the Stuarts, died, nominally Queen but with no direct heir to follow her, the newly established upper class brought in from Germany a cousin of hers who could not even speak the English language, who had no moral authority, and who was more hopelessly a puppet even than had been the first supplanter of the Stuarts. He reigned – if it can be called reigning – under the title of George I.

From that day to this, but of course in reality from far earlier, England has been not a monarchy at all but an aristocratic State. Power has since then resided in a restricted wealthy class under whose guidance the country has advanced prodigiously for two centuries in wealth and numbers and power. This new form of aristocratic government became in the long run popular and accepted as typically national.

It administered well, and its great success in commerce and other forms of international power made it seem not only national in the eyes of Englishmen but almost wholly beneficent.

Meanwhile the titular office of King had been continued. There was still nominally a monarch and the monarch exercized a number of functions which were not of great force but had a real existence all the same. There had in the midst of the process been an effort on the part of one of the shadow Kings (George III) to attempt some small approach to real power, but whatever chance that had of being realized was knocked on the head by the grievously unpopular war with France and America, which ended in the loss of England's first colonial Empire.

Now though the Crown had thus apparently disappeared and had become no more than a sort of vague symbol of unity, it was still more than a mere office, for it was vested in a person, a human being with a will and ability to exercize that will; *there thus always remained some potentiality of monarchical resurrection.* Under the surface the King or Queen could exercize some measure of influence, and the mere fact that a King or Queen was titular head gave that influence a certain substance.

But the whole position was ambiguous. The King or Queen of the moment was in some small part a monarch. For instance, titles and honors (which are more sought after in England than anywhere else) depended in some small degree upon the monarch's choice, also the monarch's personal or family attachment to this or that European group was not without effect upon English alliances and policy.

More important, however, than all this was the personal public conduct of the monarch. His or her reputation for dignity, patriotism or what not might be very different from his or her real dignity, patriotism or what not, but it was essential to the order of society that the image of such dignity, patriotism and the rest should be maintained.

Thus stood the situation when King George V, who had worked ceaselessly and most successfully to fulfill the function he had inherited, ambiguous though it was, died. It was among his last acts to throw his personal weight into the scales in favor of peace during a very dangerous international situation, wherein his judgement of the peril was sounder than that of many of his political masters, the politicians and financiers who held the reins of power.

Now ambiguous situations cannot continue forever, they are always at last resolved by a shock and reality appears. That shock was delivered shortly after the death of George V by the proposed marriage of his eldest son, who had succeeded him, Edward VIII. That marriage did not correspond, in the eyes of the mass of Englishmen, to the ideal which they had in mind as that of the titular head of the State. How the strain was resolved we all know. It was done not by those who held power but we may fairly say by public opinion; it became a choice between the abandonment of the proposed marriage or abdication.

Abdication followed, and the King's next brother, Albert, was proclaimed King under the title of George VI.

I have said that ambiguous situations are always resolved at last by a shock; just as unstable chemical conditions are resolved by an explosion. The apparent solution in this case had been one final step whereby all real power in the monarch had disappeared. Most people in England and certainly all foreigners concluded from the episode that the revival of monarchy in England was no longer possible. The poor ghost of the ancient function had finally been laid, and England appeared to be definitely fixed beyond further question as an oligarchic plutocracy firmly established in an aristocratic form, that is, in a form made stronger through the reverence paid to the rich by the poor and the acquiescence by the whole state in the domination of the governing wealthy class. That class had raised the nation to the highest pitch of power in the immediate past, men were thoroughly used to its domination, they despised the less stable nations in which wealth (and especially inherited wealth) is not so revered, they idolized the type of authority under which they lived not only in peace and order but with magnificence, and they were filled with an inordinate but natural national pride.

Now the ultimate issue will almost certainly not prove to be what this superficial view would have it. So far from the last shred of monarchical power having disappeared, the way now lies open for a resurrection of such power, perhaps in the near future and certainly in the long run.

The name of Kingship and the nominal institution attached to it have survived, the ambiguous play-acting which pretended that there was at once a king and yet no king has come to an end. There will probably be (and that in a not very remote future) appeal made – first probably in quite small matters, but as time goes on in larger and larger matters – from the money power, the politicians and all that is combined under the term "Upper Class", to the monarch as representative of the whole nation, and particularly on behalf of those who are affected by our increasing poverty.

It does not follow that the first tentative appeal to the monarch will result in personal action by the monarch, at first at any rate. Much more probably, the beginnings of the change will come in the shape of some outside advice or connection using the name of the Crown against all that combination of aristocracy, plutocracy and oligarchic power which has hitherto been the strength and safeguard of England. When the first small tentative appeal is made, from whomever the response to it comes, it will have to be listened to and in part acted upon. When that thin end of the wedge has been introduced much more will follow.

That is the real situation, which nobody sees or will allow for. The effect of it will appear when the next considerable strain shall fall upon the English Commonwealth.

Modern Poetry

Three Papers Read at the Meeting of the Modern Language Association, Richmond, December, 1936

I. Modern Poets and Convention

ALLEN TATE

I SHALL begin these remarks as if they were to be a preface to a book of my own verse. It is a kind of verse about which I know things that nobody else can know, though I daresay I shall never discover in it the things that would be good for me to know. It is, I think, a toss-up whether this kind of preface is an act of presumption or of humility. Poets insist upon writing criticism, but why they should wish to speak critically upon the occasion of their appearance as poets I do not know. Milton and Donne wrote two of the best prefatory notes in the language; they are high criticism, worth more to us today as poets than anything else before John Dryden. There is no reason to believe that Milton was uncertain of *Samson Agonistes*, or that Donne addressed Lord Craven because he doubted the value of the poems that he was inviting the reader to examine. With an envy of more confident poets that I hope is not unbecoming, I am twice diffident: I should feel uncertain in a time of poetic confidence, and I feel a special uncertainty in an age that does not allow its poets a proper confidence in their background.

I do not know why other poets write; I can only suspect why I do. I know nothing of the sources and influences of my contemporaries, even when these interesting psychological and historical features of the art of poetry seem to be plain to the scholars. I ask your indulgence if, in the remarks that follow, I shall refer to my own experience. I cannot be certain even of that, and I am sorry that my comment must be negative.

No poem that I have tried to write has come out at the end according to plan. The result, which is the completed poem, ought to justify or condemn this defect of intention; but with that result I am not concerned. I am interested here in the negative fact, and I cite it because unprinted confessions of certain living poets, now to be used against them – I mean Mr. Mark Van Doren and Mr. John Crowe Ransom – point to the same hand-to-mouth poetic economy in my friends and contemporaries. That we cannot keep in view a studied end witnesses a modern impotence in the art of planned composition, a blindness to a common source of poetic understanding (if it exists), a failure to observe the proper canons of poetry. Perhaps Milton knew before he wrote a word what imagery he would use at the end of Lycidas; but I suppose he did not know. It makes little difference; whatever imagery he had to use, the pastoral convention dictated the conclusion, and there was at least some restriction of choice. His departure for new pastures, after he had written the great pastoral of the language, may seem willful, or perhaps it may cast suspicion upon his ultimate belief in its conventions as the stay to a final and self-contained form. Allow Milton all the scepticism here that you will, and he would yet have considered our total lack of conventions a mystery of the first order. He might have made up a little myth – as we are not able to do – to dramatize this poverty of ours, and to give it dignity.

I have not completed this observation; before I do I should like to glance at the related question of tradition in poetry. I seem to understand this problem a little less every day. I only know that there are certain effects in the poetry of the past that I cannot reproduce; nor do I see them successfully reproduced in other modern verse. It is a significant discrepancy that Mr. Paul Elmer More has found between the criticism and the poetry of Mr. T. S. Eliot. The criticism exhibits an insight into the poetry of the past that Mr. More, I believe, would call profound; but Mr. Eliot's own poetry seems to be quite different from the poetry that he admires. If Mr. Eliot is a traditionalist, and I think he notoriously is, why doesn't he write traditional poetry? Why, for example, doesn't he write sonnets? The conception of tradition implicit in this view is a little like that of Mr. Pound's lady from Kansas:

She held that a sonnet was a sonnet
And ought never to be destroyed,
And had taken a number of degrees and
Continued with hope of degrees and
Ended in a Baptist learnery
Somewhere near the Rio Grande.

I too believe that a sonnet is a sonnet, but the best that I have been able to do in support of an historical belief in the value of a strict form is to write in the last fifteen years about twenty bad sonnets.

Again I envy my more fortunate and more gifted contemporaries. Where shall the modern poet, for whom Eliot spoke when he said that novelty is preferable to repetition, learn anything that he can use? I have been able to learn that a sonnet always has fourteen lines and is sometimes written to Laura; yet, if one who does not understand tradition is entitled to an opinion, a tradition is not so easily mastered. I shall have to mention names. Although Miss Millay's beautiful sequence, *Fatal Interview*, makes adroit use of the best conventions of the Elizabethan love sonnet, it is, in terms of these observations, profoundly un-traditional. Certain conventions of the past have not merely been used; they have dictated the quality of the language, which is a language not rooted in the sensibility of our time. The style is only brilliant *pastiche*. I should cite Mr. Ransom's "Captain Carpenter" as a perfectly traditional poem. There is no other poem like it, in style, versification, and imagery, in the whole range of English poetry. Poetry in the great tradition never has more than unimportant resemblances to the poetry preceding it. The ordinary reader, or the lover of poetry – a mysterious person, for no one speaks of a lover of physics or of the differential calculus – the ordinary cultivated reader is usually the enemy of tradition; he wants to see only what he has already seen in the past.

The life of the un-traditional poet must be the life of Riley, for his popularity, if he is a skillful manipulator of mnemonic tricks, is almost automatic. For the traditional poet the task is a little more difficult. He is a practical man, and his question is always: Where can I find something that I can use? When one of the early poems of Eliot or Pound – I have a suspicion, not being able to remember clearly, that it may, incredibly enough, have been a poem by Mr. Masefield – when one of these shocking poems appeared, Sir William Watson announced that the language of Shakespeare was good enough for him. I do not know the precise significance of the fact that Eliot's "Prufrock" – I hope that was the poem – is closer to one of the several languages of Shakespeare than Sir William Watson's own verse. I suppose that actually Sir William Watson did not think Shakespeare's language quite good enough, since he has never used it. I find it, alas, far too good for me.

Whatever it is that stands powerfully under the language of Shakespeare, that center of obscure luminosity that one penetrates only after a second reading, I admire at a distance, if I may be sure that I am entitled to admire it at all after thirty readings; I try to understand it as an archaeologist, picking up a piece of chased bronze, marvels at the civilization of the sixth city of Troy.

I am not exaggerating this: I can only challenge you, if you think that the style of Shakespeare, or the stylelessness of his many styles, presents not so much a mystery of the human spirit as an opportunity for research, to try to write a play or a sequence of sonnets in one of those styles. You should have no trouble doing this, if you are the kind of traditionalist that Mr. More evidently wished Mr. Eliot to be. Your play or your sequence would be the test of your ultimate understanding of a great poet. That is the miserable test of the modern traditional poet at every moment of his career. Where, in Shakespeare or in some other giant of the past, can he find something useful? Something that he can carry on? Common sense must govern one's poetry no less than one's behavior in society. If I were appearing before you this morning in doublet and hose, you would not applaud a traditionalist who understood the sixteenth century; you would laugh at a fool. The historian of manners — and manners include poetry, which also pertains to the conduct of men in society — can tell us how men behaved in another age, but they did not behave as they did because somebody told them about it. Understanding in both poetry and manners is the practice of poetry and manners, not talk about them; as it is in carpentry and plumbing. For the terms of our behavior must express the meaning of our experience, and no poet can give us a traditional experience unless he has available for his use some kind of traditional behavior. A poetic convention is a kind of behavior.

It is behavior because it is a peculiar focus of language upon a realm of our experience. Much of our best second-rate poetry today repeats the language of another age, and we respond to it with that part of our sensibility that has not changed. I enjoy a great deal of this kind of contemporary verse, in the vanity that permits us to like something because it reminds us of something that is better. The effort it cost us to master Keats serves us handsomely with Mr. Masters and the late Vachel Lindsay, who give us the romantic sensibility somewhat disguised, a little debased. This poetry is not unlike grandmother's clothes in the attic; they give us the sense of her life without the difficulties famous in grandmothers. You remember Ford's beautiful lines:

> *For he is like to something I remember*
> *A great while since, a long, long time ago.*

The living person, however dear she may be, menaces the order of our sensibility; the souvenirs of her life are the comfortable assurance that all of her but our own love is dead. And we are permitted to contemplate that love in terms that she cannot come back to challenge.

I fear this little allegory is no more successful than some others that I have tried to write. The living person is the traditional poet, the convention plus the individual experience; the clothes in the attic are the convention alone.

A convention is quite simply the way in which some dead or elderly person has used language, and used it so powerfully that we can but carry on its major significance. In my brief, necessarily unsuccessful career as a teacher I had trouble in convincing the students that a poetic convention is not a lump of material lying on the table, ready to be grabbed. A student wrote: "In Donne's verse there is an element of the courtly lyric." Poetry is elements mixed, like a good *bouillabaisse*. I asked the student whether Donne's way of writing a courtly lyric was different from Wyat's. The reply gave Donne's attitude towards the courtly convention all the advantages of the late Calvin Coolidge's summary of the preacher's view of sin. The student said: "Donne was against it."

I think I am not doing an injustice to the prevailing criticism of our time when I say that much of the best modern poetry is assumed to be against this convention or that; against Victorianism; against rhetoric, against rime and meter, against Swinburne and the eternal verities. Many persons who write verse are either for or against them, but no modern poet who is worth half an hour is against any of these things; nor is he for them. He only asks, of them as of other supposedly "traditional" properties of verse, how can I use it? A convention lives only in terms of language; for language is the embodiment of our experience in words. Donne's experience was different by two generations from Wyat's, and Donne all but destroyed a convention in which Wyat was both comfortable and great. It would be frivolous to think that Donne set out to destroy any convention whatsoever. The work of a great poet – and great poets are, like Donne, often minor poets – is a body of new convention, a permanently intelligible order of human experience. We cannot penetrate the mind of another age deeply enough to repeat its experience: it is the task of poetry then to comprehend its awareness of the past in the experience of the present.

I bring these remarks to an end at a point where I hope they will be continued in other papers on this program. I leave the causes and the results of the modern poet's difficulties entirely in the air. I should misrepresent my views if I left you to infer that his difficulties are without remedy or are not a kind of advantage in themselves. I can only repeat that the achievement of a new order of experience does not consist in sensations or landscapes that no one has felt or seen before. A new order of experience – the constant aim of serious poetry – exists in a new order of language. The dodo bird in the language of Mr. Masefield would be as commonplace as the turkey whose leg I expect to eat for lunch.

II. The Reading of Modern Poetry

CLEANTH BROOKS AND ROBERT PENN WARREN

The subject of this paper is the relation of modern poetry to its audience – if an audience exists. The average reader too often finds either that he does not understand the poem at all, or that what he feels he understands he does not like. In either case he fails to meet with what he considers to be poetry. He expresses his dissatisfaction in a number of special objections, which we may tabulate:

1. Lack of high seriousness
2. Lack of universal emotion
3. Low or unpleasant subject matter
4. Ambiguous or ironical attitude
5. Lack of logical connection and/or progression
6. Too closely knit logical structure
7. Associational composition
8. Incongruity of association
9. Abruptness of transition
10. Stream of consciousness as method and/or subject
11. Distortion of language
12. Lack of agreeable metrical effects
13. Special reference and allusion
14. Private symbols

Analysis will reveal the fact that some of these objections contradict each other. For instance, critics who complain of the lack of high seriousness or the presence of low subject matter complain of the lack of a sublime, an aristocratic quality; but those who object to a lack of universal emotional appeal object to an absence of a democratic quality. Further, one critic objects to too much ratiocination, and the next objects to a lack of logical connection or progression. When one considers the variety of the objections and the difficulty of putting them into any schematic form, one realizes that they do not spring from any coherent aesthetic principle, and indicate, on occasion, merely a general displeasure. But this unrationalized displeasure makes some strange bedfellows. The Marxist lion will lie down with the Ladies' Club lamb. Or to take a more dramatic instance, Mr. John Sparrow, the author of *Sense and Poetry*, will praise *The Literary Mind*, by Max Eastman, as "a most trenchant and amusing examination of modern aberrations in literature", neglecting to realize the fact that the triumph of Mr. Eastman's general principles would render any teaching of literature immediately obsolete, and, incidentally, would deprive Mr. Sparrow of his job. For Mr. Eastman sees all past literature, except for a few purple passages, which he calls "pure poetry", as irretrievably damned by the presence of unscientific statements and assumptions foisted off on the reader as "truths".

Again, Mr. Sparrow, who gives Mr. Eastman respectful approval, and who goes to some pains to justify the "difficulty" of method and style in Jacobean poetry, might have been less approving had he lingered on the following passage from Mr. Eastman's somewhat impressionistic history of literature in *The Literary Mind*: " . . . this same Cult of Unintelligibility with its accompaniment of grammatical and verbal concoction, swept over the literary world once before, and . . . our gentle Shakespeare in ripe years was a member in good standing of it. In some of his later plays, *A Winter's Tale*, for instance, Shakespeare talks . . . a private cerebral gibberish that goes almost as far from verbal communication as the most extravagant perpetrations of the modernists." But there is a more fundamental opposition. Each of the critics has his own preconception. Eastman is looking for a poetry without statement, a poetry that gives the moment of pure realization. Sparrow is looking for a poetry that will make some statement, even though he admits that "this meaning may be a poor thing, in itself not worth seeking and not worth expressing". Somebody is wrong. Now, if one recalls, in addition to the foregoing items, the attacks made upon modern poetry under the auspices of Humanist didacticism, on the one hand, and of Marxist didacticism, on the other, then the tiger's chaudron is indeed in the soup. Since much has been made of the fact that certain admirers of modern poetry advance very different reasons for their admiration, it may be well to remember that unanimity of principle is not characteristic of the detractors.

These critics, though not agreed on principles, are usually agreed in finding in modern poetry a certain reticence or unintelligibility. This agreement, however, is deceptive, for when their concealed disagreement on principles is brought into the open, one discovers that they are not agreed as to what should be communicated in any poetry whatsoever. Obviously this is the crux of any theoretical discussion, for it is not enough that a poem merely communicate *something*. A poem must communicate poetry. A poem may be read in a number of ways – as a sociological, or a historical, or a philological, or a philosophical, or a metrical document. Such types of reading, though invaluable in preparing for the proper reading of a poem, do not constitute that reading. In addition to the types of misreading accounted for by a dependence on special frames of reference such as the foregoing, there is the type of misreading that derives from the association of certain special effects of emotions with the idea of poetry in general, or of certain personal experiences with the idea of poetry in general. That is, the types of misreading that derive from stock responses and the reader's personal history. In such cases, we must remember that it is not the poet's poem that is being communicated but a stereotyped poetic feeling on the part of the reader which is being prodded into wakefulness in his consciousness. We may summarize these two general types of misreading by saying that the first involves the substitution of an *a priori* informational frame of reference for the poetic reading, and the second involves the substitution of an *a priori* emotional frame of reference.

These types of misreading, as has been indicated, apply to all poetry, that of the past as well as that of the present. It is worth our while at this point to emphasize them, however, for they motivate many of the particular objections to modern poetry that were earlier enumerated. But these two general types of misreading grow out of the same fundamental misconception of the nature of a poem. This misconception neglects the fact that a poem, in so far as it is successful, is a unified construct, a psychological whole; and since a poem is an organism it is not only greater than, but different from, the sum of its parts. Indeed, it cannot be too highly emphasized that what we usually think of as the poetic quality resides in a functional combination of factors rather than in the intrinsic nature of any single factor. For instance, the claim has actually been made that *incarnadine* is an intrinsically poetic word, but we tolerate this conception only in so far as we associate it with "The multitudinous seas incarnadine", or with some other specific case of poetic effect. Transfer it to a lipstick advertisement, and what becomes of its intrinsic poetry? As a matter of fact, to take a more extreme example, the word *never* seems, to say the least, fairly colorless and negative. To repeat it five times in succession does not on logical grounds add to its poetic efficacy. However, on psychological grounds, the repetition, when placed in the mouth of Lear in Shakespeare's play, becomes extremely poetic. Obviously, the poetic force is derived from a dramatic context. The same principle will hold true, with certain obvious reservations, of metrical effects. That certain lines have in themselves an agreeable or melodious effect cannot be denied. But there are contexts in which a melodious line is thoroughly inappropriate.

But this general principle is most often attacked in controversy with regard to the use of imagery. This attack is usually made by using as a concealed premise the doctrine that the agreeable or beautiful image is in itself a poetic end. An idiot, slobbering and mouthing, scarcely provides a decorative image, but he may appear in the best poetic society, as the following quotation will attest:

> *Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,*
> *Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,*
> *To the last syllable of recorded time;*
> *And all our yesterdays have lighted fools*
> *The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle;*
> *Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,*
> *That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,*
> *And then is heard no more; it is a tale*
> *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*
> *Signifying nothing.*

Of course, the high seriousness and elevated beauty of this passage have been rarely impugned, though one may hold the pious belief that the idiot, before making this drawing-room appearance, has had his face washed and his nose blown. But anyone alive to the meaning of the image realizes that the poetic force lies in the horror of this brute parody of the human and rational. It may be objected that the examples, just given, occur in drama, and that the context in drama allows these items to derive special meanings or values. This is very true, and these examples have been drawn from drama because they make the case most emphatically. But all poetry is at root dramatic – that is, we have always a speaker responding to a situation.

This same line of reasoning may be pursued in regard to the various doctrines of poetic subject matter, predispositions to consider certain ideas, moods, and attitudes as intrinsically beautiful. These ideas, moods, and attitudes may be desirable in themselves, but the question in any given poem is whether they have been made to function in an organized whole.

It should be unnecessary to devote this attention to these principles, principles which almost anyone will readily concede in purely theoretical discussion. But that they need to be reiterated, and that their opposites are smuggled into most attacks on modern poetry, can be demonstrated. For instance, an able scholar and distinguished critic will innocently rest his case against a contemporary poet in the following terms: "Is it beauty of sound? . . . Is it a sequence of lovely images? That will be sought equally in vain. Nor can the piece lay claim to intellectual interest: the thought that appears to inform it is singularly commonplace." Whether the poem in question is bad or good could never be determined by this critical approach, for it leaves unanswered the question of the relation of the parts of the poem to the total intention. And another famous critic would ban the word *bloated* from poetry because, as he affirms, it is "sacred to the memory of dead fish". The word *bloated* may be the wrong word in any given poem, but never for this reason. Indeed, most of the attacks on modern poetry involve this basic misconception as to the nature of poetry, a misconception which considers it a bundle of items intrinsically poetic in themselves and neglects the fundamental fact that the poetic effect is always dependent upon relationships. Indeed, most statements that any given poem is unintelligible are simply confessions to the failure to find the intrinsically poetic items existing in isolation.

But the general principle just laid down does not, or rather does not seem to, take into account the charge that is most often made against modern poetry – the charge of unintelligibility caused by an absence of logical links. The critic may hold that he is quite willing to accept the fact that a poem must be appreciated as a total organism but is unable to do so without benefit of logical connection. In almost all cases this critic will mean by logical connection the explicit general statement — he does not mean that the connections between parts, or the general theme of the poem, are not susceptible to a logical statement. He merely refuses to attempt the leap himself. One critic, therefore, considers it a deadly attack on some modern poems to say that the parts of a poem "form a psychological, not a logical, unity". The answer to this sort of thing is simple: every successful poem creates a *psychological* unity, and not even the simplest metaphor fails to violate a *logical* unity. The distinction between the two kinds of unity is extremely important: psychological unity is the aim of every poem; logical unity is a device to achieve this aim, and may or may not be used.

A characteristic violation of this principle is committed in Mr. Sparrow's attack on "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", by T. S. Eliot. (The critic, by the way, commits another violation of the principle of psychological unity and indulges himself in a piece of forensic strategy, by submitting to his readers only a part of the poem, the section from line 24 through line 47.)

Concerning his chosen passage the critic remarks in one place: " . . . clearly no canon of intelligibility has guided the selection, and no single structure of thought emerges." Later, the same critic counsels us to "suspect no meaning and ask for no interpretation". Such comment by a serious critic perhaps justifies an exercise in interpretation that otherwise might appear superfluous. Here are the lines on which Mr. Sparrow comments:

Half-past two,
The street-lamp said,
"Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue
And devours a morsel of rancid butter."
So the hand of the child, automatic,
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along
the quay.
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
I have seen eyes in the street
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
An old crab with barnacles on his back,
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
The lamp sputtered,
The lamp muttered in the dark.
The lamp hummed:
"Regard the moon,
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
She winks a feeble eye,
She smiles into corners.
She smooths the hair of the grass.
The moon has lost her memory. . . ."

The first two sections of the poem, which precede the passage in question, are primarily expository. This exposition may be summarized: the setting, a walk at night down deserted streets and an indication of the basic theme, the dissolving of the smug, easily accepted organization of life, broken up here as seen under a different light, so that the memory of past life seems to have lost any vital pattern. (The theme somewhat resembles that in Section L of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" – "Be near me when my light is low.")

The first image implies that memory is a sea. The items thrown up by memory are like the branch. The items of memory, when really experienced were alive, growing, leafy, organic. Now, like the twisted branch, they are dead. The image of the world's skeleton is easily related. The content of memory is the world a person carries about with him, and he identifies himself in its terms. Under the influence of this occasion he discovers that the skeleton – the frame of the organization for this world – is abstracted and dead like the branch. The image of the broken spring reënforces the meaning of the preceding lines by a parallel development of the idea. (Observe how the factors of stiffness, loss of resilience, hardness, et cetera, are used as the common denominator of meaning.)

The street lamp throwing its light on the cat seems to ask the man to regard it as it responds to brute appetite. So the child (the child of a particular memory as dramatized) responds to the toy, a thing worthless to an adult, with infantile curiosity and pleasure. And so the crab responded to the irritation of the stick. This image carries the further meaning that the difficulties and proddings of life had been planless, motiveless, and wanton. "As flies to wanton boys . . ." The child and the crab, then are particular memories, memories aroused by association with the mechanical character of the cat's action, which in this case serves as the denominator of meaning.

The rest of the poem follows the same principle of composition.

The "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," as has been said, illustrates a type of difficulty resulting from a lack of logical connection (or, to be exact, a lack of statement). The following passage from "Ash Wednesday", which has been singled by Mr. Eastman for special attack, illustrates a type of difficulty resulting, not from a lack of logical connection, but from what might be thought to be an excess of logic:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
About the center of the silent Word.

Had Mr. Eastman, who calls the passage "an oily puddle of emotional noises", read it with more care, he might have discovered that what baffled him was the presence of logic, rather than its absence. Even out of its context (and Mr. Eastman makes no effort to indicate the nature of its context) the passage can be paraphrased if one assumes even a rudimentary acquaintance with the Christian religion.

The passage is built about a set of oppositions, the most important of which is the opposition between the word and the Word, between the word as a common noun and the Word as the Christian Logos. To paraphrase: if the word of the gospel is lost, seems to be spent, is not heard, is not spoken, nevertheless, this unspoken gospel is the informing principle of the world, the Logos, which is the principle without temporal presentation, the Logos within the world, and for the world (*for* in the sense of providing a *basis for*); and the light (the Logos as Christ, the Light of the World) shone in the darkness just as the informing principle first shone over chaos, and against the Logos the unstilled world revolved. Obviously this statement does not take into account other levels of meaning in the term *word* and elsewhere in the passage. There is one further important statement clearly indicated, which turns upon the opposition between the two senses of the word *still*. In the foregoing statement, we have taken it only in its sense of nevertheless, but the sense of fixity is also brought into sharp focus by the use of the word *unstilled*. The reader's sensitivity to such a play upon words has been sharpened by the fundamental opposition of meanings in the term *word*. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that the passage here is a fragment of a rather long poem, and that the meaning of this passage is substantially reënforced by the context provided by the poem and, as a matter of fact, by the total context provided by the poet's work.

These extracts have been used here because they were selected as test cases by two of the most vigorous and systematic antagonists of modern poetry. In both instances, the attack was on the ground of unintelligibility. Therefore the present paper does not attempt to evaluate the passages as poetry, but merely to demonstrate that a specific meaning is communicated. But such an evaluation would have to be undertaken not on the grounds proposed by the critics but by a consideration of the organic nature of any poem. Such an evaluation could scarcely begin by a ripping of the passages from a context. As a matter of fact, Eastman and Sparrow are not really objecting because the poetry does not communicate; they are objecting because it does not flatter certain preconceptions about the poetic effect.

Three further distinctions are frequently neglected by the critics of modern poetry. (1) The average reader, in considering the problems of difficulty and obscurity in modern poetry, tends to think in terms of the extreme and eccentric, the work of Stein or the *Work in Progress* of Joyce. But the issues raised by the passages here considered are obviously very different from those raised by the work of Stein or Joyce. A disposition to respect the aesthetic principles of Eliot, for instance, or to admire some of his poems, does not imply a disposition to defend Stein or Joyce. (2) Furthermore, a disposition to respect a certain set of principles does not imply an indiscriminate admiration of all poems stemming from those principles. (3) Every set of philosophical and technical principles for poetic composition is susceptible to its own characteristic form of poetic failure. A Tennyson implies a Locker-Lampson or a T. E. Browne, and the Tennyson of his characteristic successes implies the Tennyson of "Come into the garden, Maud". And every age presents its own variety of clichés, stock responses, and dogmatisms. In relation to modern poetry there is a tendency in most attacks (and defenses, too) to neglect the importance of these distinctions.

A paper so brief as this must neglect certain special problems; for example, there is the matter of allusion and special reference, such as one finds in *The Waste Land*. But the use of allusion has no novelty, and the problem of reference has little theoretical interest, for it is primarily a matter of expediency. A second question, the matter of private symbols, such as one finds in extreme form in the later poetry of W. B. Yeats, though more difficult and interesting, must be neglected. It is ironical to observe that his work is enthusiastically applauded by critics some of whose principles for attack on other modern poetry would apply most damagingly to Yeats.

Waiving these essentially subsidiary problems, the authors of this paper can only hope to indicate an approach to the problem of poetic communication, which involves the relation of any poetry to its audience. As has been pointed out, the meaning of any poem can only be discussed in terms of the functional relations involved among the parts. If this principle is sound, then most of the theoretical objections, as usually presented, will disappear. If this leaves each special case to be decided on its own merits – so much the better for the future of technical poetic criticism.

As a matter of fact, the problem of obscurity and difficulty in poetry has been given especial salience in our own time because of the re-assertion of the poem as a dramatic construct. The unity which the poet has attempted to attain is not an easily won unity, but one wrested from recalcitrant and discordant materials. Consequently such a poetry has been characterized by ironical devices, wrenched rhythms, abrupt transitions, apparent discords, non-decorative metaphors, deficiency of statement, and when successful has attained its unity only in terms of a total intention. Such a poetry demands a fuller participation on the part of the reader. It is not an easy poetry, but it can claim to take its charter from Coleridge himself: for Coleridge admitted a theory of imagination that would accommodate this practice, and indeed described the imagination as resolution of opposites. The imagination, as he describes it, "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities . . . the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake . . . with enthusiasm and feeling 'profound or vehement' ". "The sense of musical delight . . . with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling."

III. Achievements of Intellectualist Poetry

MARK VAN DOREN

The achievement of a poet is measured by his best poems. In his own time it may not be known which poems these are; nor can such a thing ever be absolutely known. But if the question fails to arise, or if the answers to it never become interesting, the poet can scarcely be said to have achieved anything beyond the satisfaction his labor gave him.

The achievement of a generation of poets must ultimately meet the same test. If a few perfect and permanent poems have nowhere resulted from the efforts of many related men, then all the efforts of all these men may be considered fruitless. The decision can be postponed. There is no hurry about it. But it must remain possible, and eventually it must be made.

I am not trying to make it here with respect to that poetry of our time which bears the label "Intellectualist". If I read the label correctly, and if I know where it belongs, there are some poems underneath it which I suspect of permanence. But I shall not name them, nor shall I name their authors. I leave that whole matter to bolder spirits and to wiser persons who perhaps are not yet born.

It is more profitable at the moment to consider another sort of achievement altogether: one having to do not with isolated or accidental triumphs but rather with the entire effect of a movement taken at its average level, and measured as much in terms of its intention, its view of itself, as in terms of its success in the wide world where poetry competes with a million other things for the attention of men. The achievement I have in mind is a little lower than success and a great deal higher than the fixing of a fashion or the establishment of a style. It has to do with all that the poetry under dispute has made us think about the art in general, and furthermore with the value which this thinking has had for us. I shall maintain that Intellectualist poetry has forced us to think exhaustively about the art which it serves – about the elements of this art, I mean, and about its history – and that as a result we have become an audience which for better or for worse is committed to the complex poem; whether as a thing to despise or as a thing to admire does not for the moment matter.

We are committed to it because we have it, and because we have it we know more than certain audiences have known concerning the elements of poetry. It is arguable that those elements should not be known;

nor do I maintain that consciousness of them is an unmixed blessing. Many readers to-day for whom the complex poem is merely difficult, or merely impossible, would call it a curse. They want the simple poem back again. What they can learn from the present situation is that there is no such thing as a simple poem. There are certain poems which seem simple, and perhaps it is true that every poem should seem so. But in a day when few poems that happen to be worth talking about are capable of giving us such an illusion it may be important to study the rest of them as they stand. They stand for the most part as skeletons rather than as figures in the flesh, adorned with smiles and complexions; and some of them are little more than diagrams of the nervous system, hideous with a tracery of vermilion and purple lines. They are studies in anatomy, and as such they are an excellent preparation for the day, provided it ever comes, when poetry again walks the earth like a living and natural person.

The manifestly complex poem is confusing in the way that diagrams are confusing. As soon as the joints are exposed there seem to be too many of them; we cannot recognize what stands before us; it is not a friend whom we immediately and neatly know. And in our bewilderment we rack our brains for an explanation of the strangeness, of the confusion. Three explanations now current are especially plausible.

One of these takes off from the proposition that the art of our age is eclectic. We know too much about the past, and keep too much of it around us as we read or write. Every style is available to us; which means in poetry that the act of composition becomes a juggler's act, our poet all the while begging us to observe the erudition with which he manages to avoid saying anything. The arrogance of a Dryden towards the past, or of a Wordsworth, is unwholesomely absent; were such arrogance possible to-day we might have at least one poet who was immersed in the age, blandly swimming in its silent depths and happily blessed with creative blindness.

The second explanation takes off from the same neighborhood but goes in a different direction. The age is eclectic in ideas; we believe too many things. It is not that we believe nothing. That would be a calamity, but it is a worse calamity to inhabit this wilderness of theories among which we are meaninglessly free to choose. Neither orthodoxy nor heresy is possible in a situation which bestows upon all truths an equal and therefore a minimum value. So the poet must make what stir he can among the small, dry bones of thought, rattling them fantastically or arranging them in patterns which at best can only startle us by the oddness with which familiar notions have been juxtaposed. Having nothing to say, he must contort his tongue; having nothing to think, he must trepan his own skull and show off the gray matter.

The third explanation is more tempting than either of these. It blames society. Poverty, war, and the progressive annihilation of opportunity are posed as conditions affecting the artist no less than any other man, so that he too — and all the more because he is a specialist in reactions — finds his spirit strangled. The world about him is so obviously evil and ugly that he feels a fierce desire to escape the very data of existence. Objects, customs, things — he distrusts them all, and thereby cuts himself off from the raw materials which are necessary to any artist. An artist must love his world; which means among other things that he must find it worthy of his criticism. If it is not worthy, or if criticism is hopeless, he will turn upon his art and rend it like a madman, a savage, or a child. So with our painters today, our musicians, and of course our poets.

None of the three explanations can be utterly rejected; yet none of them explains enough. The three of them together do not in fact account for our predicament, which perhaps is not to be fully understood by any man now alive – until, in other words, it has ceased to be a predicament. The most confusing thing is that we are confused. The distressing thing is that we should have so much to say about the nature of poetry when like all nature it ought to be taken for granted. And it is still more distressing that we should have to talk about the rôle which intellect plays in its composition. The rôle ought to be either more obvious or more obscure than we find it at the moment to be. Poetry is written with the mind, of course; but it is conceivable that we should not have to notice that it is. The intellect – there is our question, put somehow derisively in the last syllable of the word Intellectualist, and as difficult to answer as any hiss is, whether from the gallery or from the chair.

For the poetry beneath the label is not intellectual. If it were we should have no use for the term. Not that this amounts to calling it emotional. The terms are not opposite, and it is hard to imagine what would be meant by the statement that poetry is written with the emotions, or is an expression of them. They are themselves the expression of something else – probably the present moment. Yet they are somehow relevant to poetry, just as the mind is; and like the contemporary mind they would appear to be playing a rôle that is not quite natural to them. Both are too near the surface, and too noticeable; whereas they both should be buried to the same depth, and perhaps be indistinguishable there. Thus we are able to say of a contemporary poet that he thinks thus and that he feels so; noting one year how he thinks about the way he feels, and the next year noting how he feels about the way he thinks. His experience is too public in either case, and there is a bit of hysteria in both.

When the mind and the heart are in their proper places they control each other with a certain severity which lends an air of ritual to the resulting poem. That air of ritual, that courtesy, that smiling gravity, that sense of an emotion quieted for all time, that modesty which would divert the attention from the author to the theme, from the individual to the art he practises in an open conspiracy with many others, is all too frequently lacking in our day. The seventeenth century knew the secret best, though it remained for Emily Dickinson to put a part of it in words:

After great pain a formal feeling comes —
The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
The stiff Heart questions—was it He that bore?
And yesterday—or centuries before?

This is only a part of it; for the poem could equally well begin:

After great joy a formal feeling comes.

And Emily Dickinson as a matter of fact was talking about something else altogether. But we should be grateful to her for the phrase, "a formal feeling". Our feeling, like our thought, lacks form. Neither is lord over the other.

I am not looking into the poet's private life. I am trying to read his poems, which should be easy to read and are not. So should they be easy to write — to the extent at any rate that the poet need not convince himself that this is poetry which he is writing. He should be able to assume that, to leave definitions to others, and to attack his subject without further ado. Out of respect for his subject, whether it be the death of Edward King or the rape of Belinda's lock, he may do a great deal of hard work upon it; but the work should be agreeable to his soul, which probably will not contemplate itself as something unique in nature. There is a similar sense in which his poem will be hard for the reader. It will be hard, that is, to say just how it differs from many another poem of its age and just why it is better. Most of the "problems" presented by the average twentieth-century poem can be solved in time — leaving, one would suppose, very little of the poem in existence. But we shall never know why Carew's *Ask Me No More* is as good as it is. A dozen other poets of the seventeenth century can be said to have been trying with Carew to write that perfect poem. And who was Carew? The question is scarcely interesting unless the answer begins:

After great love a formal feeling comes.

An unpublished paper by Scott Buchanan contains this sentence: "The reason philosophy is so poor all over the world at present is that poetry is not read well, and vice versa." I do not actually know whether philosophy at present is good or bad; and I do actually believe that poetry at present is good – to the extent, let me repeat, of having produced a number of poems which I consider good in some absolute sense. Nevertheless the sentence is valuable, both for the relation which it establishes between poetry and philosophy and for the light it suddenly throws upon the bulk of Intellectualist poetry. Now the bulk of poetry in any age is poor. But ours is poor in a special way. It is not clear. And the reason may well be that metaphysics and imagination keep little company together nowadays – this in spite of the fact that we have a "metaphysical" poetry and a philosophy of dreams. The poet and the philosopher in any age should find it easy to understand each other; or rather, they should not have to understand each other at all, since both are symbols of a single thing, the mind of man at play with eternity. But here we have it upon authority that neither of them at present knows how to play with the other.

So we return to the statement that the intellect does not know its limits in poetry today; nor does emotion. The mind thrashes itself into a state of exhaustion; and the prevailing sentiments are self-pity, nostalgia, despair. But we return also to the observation that at any rate the elements of poetry are here, and here in a promising abundance. Most Intellectualist poetry is potential poetry rather than the thing itself. But potentiality is power, and power is never to be despised. If another seventeenth century lies ahead of us we shall reach it through this poetry and through no other. It is central to our time. It inherits the whole of the poetic tradition. And if it lacks one important kind of power, the power to rule itself,– well, that is better than having no self to rule.

The Restoration of Property

A. J. PENTY

"It has been found in practice, and the truth is witnessed to by the instincts in all of us, that such widely distributed property as a condition of freedom is necessary to the normal satisfaction of human nature. In its absence general culture ultimately fails and so certainly does citizenship. The cells of the body politic are atrophied and the mass of men have not even, at last, an opinion of their own, but are moulded by the few who retain ownership of land and endowments and reserves. So essential is property to full life, though it is debatable whether a full life is to be aimed at. There may be some who dislike freedom for themselves. There are certainly many who dislike it for others. But, at any rate, freedom involves property." —*Hilaire Belloc.*

IN THESE words Mr. Belloc states the gist of the case for a general restoration of property, in his recent book *An Essay on the Restoration of Property* (p. 17). It is an unanswerable case, and Mr. Belloc has put us all in his debt for having stated it with such clearness. But while he states his case for a redistribution of property with crystal clearness he is not so clear as to how, exactly, it is to be restored. Indeed he is reluctantly compelled to admit that he has "strong doubt upon the possibility of restoring property at all when it has once thoroughly disappeared. . . . The odds against a reconstruction of economic freedom in a society which has long acquired the habit and practice of wage slavery is difficult beyond any other political task". Nevertheless Mr. Belloc sticks to his guns, and prefers, if need be, to die fighting; for he sees clearly that "either we restore property or we restore slavery, to which we have already gone more than half way in our industrial society". We might get somewhere if more of us were animated by the same spirit.

Mr. Belloc lays down two principles to be remembered in connection with efforts to redistribute property. The first is that *any effort to restore property can only be successful through a deliberate reversal of economic tendencies.* The second is that *our effort will fail unless it be accompanied by regulations making for the preservation of private property, so much of it as shall have been restored.*

Both of these principles are excellent. The deliberate reversal of economic tendencies is, I am persuaded, not only necessary for the restoration of property, but for the redemption of industry. It is impossible to over-rate the importance of this principle, this break with the idea of progress. Its triumph should put some backbone into reformers, leading their activities to produce intended results, instead of results not intended — as invariably follows progressive activities today.

But reversing the current is no easy task. The principle is true, but we have to discover how, and Mr. Belloc's enquiries are not finally conclusive. He has not been able to formulate any very satisfactory policy for the restoration of property, as he sorrowfully admits. Recognizing that "the position to be attacked is formidable; so formidable that anyone may be forgiven for regarding it as not only impregnable but as invulnerable", he proceeds to consider how it may be attacked; and he finds it on the one hand in the promotion of taxation which will discriminate against big business and large-scale industry, where there is no technical reason why it should not be done on a small scale; and on the other in the restoration of the small cultivator, distributor, and craftsman. He illustrates the latter by reference to the furniture maker, "the man who makes simple or ornate furniture on a small scale with personal knowledge of the methods and without having recourse to concentrated mechanical means". "We cannot", he goes on to say, "replace him in his old position of making all the furniture needed in the community; he will for a long time to come account for no more than a fraction. But we can easily multiply his present numbers by five, even by ten, and so set an example of what is desirable in the commonwealth".

Now I happen to know something about this branch of craftsmanship. Though I am an architect by profession, in my early days I came under the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, and like so many young architects of the time, I abandoned the profession for a craft, in my case for furniture making, or to be strictly correct, furniture designing; for I confined my activities to the designing and business side. But it was only temporarily that I abandoned architecture, for I found myself up against insoluble economic problems; insoluble, that is, for anyone with very limited resources like myself. I lost a great deal of money over the venture and tied myself up for years, but the experience was invaluable. It taught me economics.

The practice of architecture had given me some knowledge of economics, but it was this excursion into the furniture trade that opened my eyes to the iniquities of the price system — and my experience was not limited to running a small workshop; for after I closed down I was so much interested in pursuing the subject that I sought and obtained positions in a couple of large furnishing houses, one in London and the other in New York, in order to find out what went on inside large commercial organizations. During the War I had successively positions in the L.C.C., the Underground, and the Coal Control; but the experience added nothing of any consequence to my knowledge, beyond the fact that everybody in them thought theirs was a rotten show and lived under the illusion that their experience was exceptional.

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Mr. Belloc says it would be easy to multiply the number of craftsmen engaged in furniture making by five or even by ten. I question it, for they would all find themselves up against the same problems as I did. Indeed such craftsmen are declining in number, and they would entirely disappear were some not propped up by private means and others by teaching-jobs. It is generally assumed by the public that the obstacle in the path of the revival of handicraft is the fact of machinery. That would be true if the craftsman attempted to cater to the popular market.

But the individual craftsman never does that. His aim is always to cater to a small high-class market where hand-production still obtains and in which he hopes to succeed by superiority of design. In sculpture and the architectural crafts, before the days of Modernism and the Neo-Grec, which largely destroyed the market for the architectural crafts, he often did succeed, for in them he could sell direct to an educated clientèle, while economically he was at no disadvantage with his "trade" competitors, who had to observe the same conditions as himself. But it is different with the movable crafts which find their way into shops. In them the small individual craftsman is at a disadvantage because he is closer to the machine, and because he cannot avail himself of the ordinary channels of distribution, and because he is up against the system of manipulated prices which favor the large firm at the expense of the small.

I said the individual craftsman can't make use of the ordinary channels of distribution. One reason for this is that he does not play the game as the distributor understands it. The distributor follows fashion and he expects those from whom he buys to do the same, and conform to the conditions of the trade. The individual craftsman either will not or cannot do this. He is an idealist and he wants to take his part in the revival of craftsmanship, therefore he cannot follow fashion; and he does not find it easy to conform to the conditions of the trade because he has a different tradition behind him. There are a few exceptions to this rule – shops which exhibit individual craftsmanship. I know something about two of them. One of them is fair dealing and its proprietor is genuinely interested in the revival of craftsmanship. But it is always on the verge of bankruptcy; it is propped up by subsidies from people interested in a revival of craftsmanship and by the fact that the proprietor is a man of small private means who is only partly dependent upon what he earns.

The other shop is a well-known and very prosperous West End firm which has a reputation for novelties. It exploits the crafts and craftsmen without conscience. The proprietor is a shark, as a description of his methods will show. Suppose a craftsman comes to him with some work of real individual distinction: he tells him he can send specimens of his work on sale or return. He will put them into the showroom to see whether there is any market for them. The craftsman falls into the trap. He sends specimens of his work. In a few weeks' time he is asked to take them away because, he is told, there is no sale. If by chance he should happen to pass the shop in a few months' time he may see a window full of articles similar in design to those he submitted.

What had happened was this: When the proprietor suggested to the craftsman that he send specimens of his work on sale or return he had no intention of selling them. He put a very high price on them to be sure they would not sell. Meanwhile, by listening to what the public had to say about them while they were in the showroom, he was able to make up his mind as to whether they would be a success if produced at a price which the public was prepared to pay. If he concluded that they would, he set his designers at work to produce variations of the designs, and had them reproduced by some sweat-shop or by mass-production. The craftsman is robbed; not only does he get nothing for his work, but his market is destroyed by cheap imitations of his work. And he has no redress; for to escape prosecution, in case the designs are registered, the proprietor has taken care that no individual piece is an exact copy of the original.

Another dodge of firms of this order to get down the price is to reject work they have ordered on the grounds that it is not up to standard, and then to consent to take it off the producer's hands at a knock-out price. I am told they regularly play this trick on small men who are not in a position to stand up to them.

In these circumstances the craftsman has little option but to organize his own market. He must depend in the main upon himself, for the honest little craft shops can only provide him with work occasionally. And this is not an easy thing to do; for not only does it demand of the individual a capacity for self-advertisement which every craftsman has not got, but it needs money and social position. In furniture the problem is particularly difficult because since the patrons of the crafts are not localized anywhere the craftsman can't localize his market; because of this his costs of distribution are very heavy, especially as most of the commissions he receives are for single pieces of furniture. This means hiring a motor specially to take a single piece of furniture, or making a large packing-case and sending it by one of the carrier-companies every time; each method is very expensive and simple work will not carry it.

The disappearance of local markets is an enormous obstacle in the path of the revival of craftsmanship. There can be no prospect of a general revival of craftsmanship so long as the craftsman is required to organize his own market. He will have to be relieved of the exceptional expenses arising from the fact that he is functioning under conditions created by industrialism; and to create such a market a great deal of money will have to be sunk. How much I don't know. It cost $250,000, I am told, to put a new timber on the market, and it would certainly not cost less to create a market for the crafts. Vastly more than this has already been spent, but it has been spent in small sums by a succession of people who had their experience to buy, and who only learned what they ought to have done by the time they were at the end of their resources.

Another difficulty of the craftsman today is that his work is intermittent. In the old days he could count on a regular flow of work, but in these days it comes in fits and starts. He has either too much or too little to do, and this again increases his costs. When the craftsman has nothing to do he generally works for stock. This presents no peculiar difficulty to the jeweller because he can get a lot of work into a little space, but it does not take long for the furniture-maker to fill up his workshop. The amount of space he requires for storage is enormous; it increases his rent, and therefore his costs.

Furniture making is undoubtedly a key craft, and a widespread revival of it would react favorably upon all the other domestic crafts. But it is beset with exceptional difficulties, and because of this the number of craftsmen engaged in it is declining, now that the initial impulse given by the Arts and Crafts movement has spent its force. It is true to say that the more utilitarian a craft is the greater the economic difficulties that confront it. That explains why the Arts and Crafts movement, from being, among other things, a protest against the dependence of art upon luxury, has become one of its feeders. It is not the fault of the craftsmen that it has ended this way. They are helpless; it is their misfortune.

But this is not the whole story. The greatest of all the obstacles which the revival of design and handicraft has to face is the system of manipulated prices that is to be found in all the retail trades. I will illustrate it by how I met it in the furniture trade. In order to tempt customers, certain things in general demand which do not admit of much variety in design, or which can be sold in quantities, such as chests of drawers, bureaus, chairs and small tables, were sold without profit, while other things such as dining tables, bookcases, sideboards, heavy curtains and carpets, carried good profits. The simpler types of design were sold at cost price and sham ornamental pieces at exorbitant ones.

The first effect of this was to stereotype the forms of design. A designer in the employ of the furnishing houses is only allowed to exercise his fancy within certain narrow limits. The furniture has to be elaborate and the curtains heavy. The designer may know simpler design would be more effective and in better taste, but he is not allowed to carry his knowledge into practice, because in that case there would be no profits; the public, having been accustomed to buying simpler things at artificially low prices, would not be prepared to pay a price that would give a working profit if only the simpler forms of design were used, though to provide such a profit the scheme in good taste might only cost half of one in bad. They would not think they were getting value for money. This illustration serves to show how unjust prices strangle creative work. They have strangled the effort to revive design and handicraft; for when conditions obtain which will not allow men to do things in the way they should be done, they lose interest in their work and begin to think only of profits.

The second effect of this system is to destroy public confidence in the integrity of the craftsman, because, working on a small scale, he cannot without serious loss to himself conform to this system. It suits the game of the large furnishing houses because they can use the pieces they sell without profit as "call-birds" or "loss leaders" to get the public into their showrooms, when, taking advantage of their customers' innocence, they will work off something on them which carries an enormous profit. Thus, as we say, "what they lose on the swings they make up on the roundabouts". But the craftsman working on a small scale cannot do this even if he would. He finds that chests of drawers, for instance, are sold in the shops for less money than he can buy the wood out of which to make them, for he can only buy wood in small quantities. And though he should sell them without profit he must charge double what the shops charge to recompense him for what he is out of pocket.

This necessity destroys public confidence in the craftsman. Because he can't produce some things at the artificially low prices for which they are sold he gets a reputation for being expensive, and the public refuses to give him work where he could easily afford to sell more cheaply than the large firms. For in one direction he has a great advantage over the large firms; he has no showroom charges, which are heavy; a fact which would allow him to compete successfully with the large furnishing houses but for the system of manipulated prices which keeps him at a distance even where he is able to compete. An architect who was once in the employ of one of these large furnishing firms told me that on the architectural side the prices they got were fantastic. A client employing an architect would not have to pay for any work he ordered more than a third of what he would have to pay if he went to one of these firms. Advertisements and showroom have to be paid for. Why do the wicked prosper? They know their technique.

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It was this experience of the furniture trade which first opened my eyes to the need of fixing prices under a system of Regulative Guilds, and fixing them in each case at a level which bears a definite relationship to the costs of production. Only when that is an accomplished fact will money become a *common measure of value*. It is the only way of putting a stop to this kind of rascality that goes on in trade; and putting a stop to it is a precedent condition of getting the small holder back into industry. Though Mr. Belloc does not actually advocate fixed prices, he comes very near to doing so, for he talks about how prices can be manipulated to destroy small men, and the need of restoring Guilds; yet he never mentions fixed and just prices, which the Guilds in the Middle Ages existed to maintain, and apart from which they would have been ineffective. I can only account for this omission by the fact that he lacked any such experience as I had in the furniture trade to bring the issue dramatically before him.

I said that the mediaeval Guilds existed to maintain fixed and just prices – and, I may add, wages. There can be no two opinions about this, for their various regulations are only finally intelligible when approached from this viewpoint. It explains the whole hierarchy of the Guilds. If fixed prices are to be maintained in industry, it can only be upon the assumption that a standard of quality can be upheld, for fixed prices are meaningless apart from a fixed standard of quality. But how can a standard of quality be upheld? It cannot be defined in terms of law. The Guilds solved this problem by placing authority in the hands of craftsmasters, a consensus of whose opinion constituted the final court of appeal. In order to ensure a supply of masters it became necessary to train apprentices, to regulate the size of the workshop, hours of labor, the volume of production, and so forth; for only when attention is given to such matters are workshop conditions created which are favorable to the production of masters, permanence of practice, and continuity of tradition. Thus we see the whole of the regulation of the Guilds, and their whole hierarchy, growing out of the primary aim of maintaining fixed and just prices.

To maintain fixed prices at a just level is to restrict money to its legitimate use as a *common measure of value*; it is to bring it into a close relationship with the real values it is supposed to represent. And to do that would go a long way towards the preservation of economic equality and the restoration of property; while, moreover, with Guilds established to maintain fixed and just prices the problems of credit and usury would not arise. The problem of credit would not arise because, as Mr. Belloc points out, the Guilds could supply credit to their members, and the problem of usury would not arise because if Guilds were coextensive with society there would be no room left for the usurer. The fact is generally overlooked that the problem of usury was in the Middle Ages essentially a rural problem, and existed there because Guilds were confined to the towns. Thus we see the fixation of prices is the first step towards the solution of the problems of property, credit, and usury. (When I speak of fixing prices at a just level I must be understood to mean not only prices but wages and rents. I cannot be expected to repeat prices, wages, and rents every time; it would make the article read like a legal document.)

By fixing prices at a just level the mediaeval Guildsmen unconsciously stumbled upon the solution of the problem of money which had perplexed the lawgivers of Greece and Rome and broken up their civilizations, as in these days it is breaking up ours. The tragedy of civilization is that the significance of this great discovery was not, at the time, understood. For though the Church advocated just prices it never advocated fixed ones. The reason for that is perhaps to be found in the fact that churchmen who alone concerned themselves with social and economic theory, were without business experience, and therefore failed to appreciate the fact that, in the long run, a high standard of commercial morality can only be maintained upon the assumption that laws exist to suppress a lower one; for while the majority prefer fair dealing there is always a recalcitrant minority who do not, and unless laws exist to keep them in subjection, they will establish immoral standards of conduct to which in the long run all but the strongest will conform.

And so it came about, in the absence of any active support on the part of the Church, that while Guilds were established in the towns no effort was made to establish them in rural areas; with the result that capitalism was allowed to grow up in them and to undermine the position of the Guilds in the towns. Experience was to prove that neither moral exhortation nor laws against profiteering could prevent a steady degeneration of commercial morality, under conditions which permitted prices to be determined by the higgling of the market. Only when the just price is a fixed price can it be maintained, and this, in the long run, is impossible unless Guilds are co-extensive with society. It is equally true to say that only when the fixed price is a just price can it be maintained; for if prices are fixed too high they lead to over-production, and if too low they lead to under-production.

If Mr. Belloc had seen the significance of fixed prices he would have been clearer about the prospects of restoring property, for undoubtedly the fixation of prices is the first step. It is the line of least resistance. Of what use is it to attempt to re-establish small cultivators on the land so long as the fluctuating price system is permitted to exist? It is inviting them to commit economic suicide. They would not have a dog's chance of success. Only big men can stand up against fluctuating prices. The man who has a sufficient reserve of capital to expand his business when prices rise, to reduce operations when they begin to fall, and can afford to wait until the tide turns, is the man who makes the big profits. Poor men cannot afford to do this. They have not a sufficient margin of capital to tide them over bad times, so they get caught when a slump comes. This ever-present danger gives rise to a state of things in which men with small capital become a prey to perpetual anxiety. They become obsessed with the difficulties of markets. Numberless men are broken by the strain that is the inevitable accompaniment of the determination of prices by the higgling of the market.

The position is paradoxical. Though the restoration of property is our aim, we yet cannot attack the problem directly because the center of economic gravity is to be found in the problem of money rather than in that of property. Money is the active thing, the thing of movement; it is the active principle in economic development while property is the passive. Property finds its way into the hands of the few, because they are in a position to manipulate exchange. For this reason we must in our efforts to restore property begin with the fixation of prices, which would put a stop to such practices.

To replace the present system whereby prices are determined by the higgling of the market by a fixed price system under Guilds would be to introduce order into the economic system at its active vital center. Once having thus introduced order at the center it would be a comparatively easy matter to deal with the problem of property which lies at the circumference. Monopolists would be no more able to offer effective resistance to a redistribution of property than landlordism was to the growth of capitalism. With such a policy the restoration of property would become practical politics. But to begin with property is to get things out of their natural order. It is to proceed from the circumference to the center, which is contrary to the law of growth. The efforts would be foredoomed to failure; since so long as financial men are at liberty to manipulate exchange they will somehow manage to get the wealth of the community into their hands.

Thus we see the solution of the social problem – as indeed of every other problem in this universe – resolves itself finally into one of order. Take things in their natural order and everything will straighten itself out beautifully. All the minor detail or secondary parts will fall into their proper places. But approach these same issues in a wrong order and confusion results. This principle is universally true. It is as true of writing a book or designing a building as of reconstructing society. The secret of success will be found in each case finally to rest upon the perception of the order in which the various issues are taken. "They are called wise", says Aquinas, "who put things in their right order and control them well."

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Not only is the problem of property inseparable from the problem of money but it is inseparable from that of machinery. Socialists are aware of this. It was because they could not reconcile the institution of property with the welfare of society under a system of unrestricted machinery that they came to demand the abolition of property. If, therefore, we demand a redistribution of property we must face the fact that it will be necessary to curtail drastically the use of machinery. We shall have to restrict its use where it conflicts with a wide distribution of property. But we must not push this principle too far, for there are other issues at stake; there are other values in the world besides small ownership which it is important to preserve. And because of this I cannot agree with Mr. Belloc when he says "It is part of our policy to favor the new road transport against the railway because road transport can be worked in small units and the railways cannot." I submit there is more in it than that. There is no single thing, in my opinion, which has proved itself so destructive of social values as the automobile. The introduction of railways had a revolutionary effect; but it kept to its tracks, it touched life at the circumference. But the automobile gets everywhere; it has shaken life at its very center, changing our personal and mental habits, our manners and morals to an extent the railway did not. It has destroyed all repose. As a result of its influence countless men have come to live for speed; and the worship of speed, like the worship of money, power, success or bigness, is a worship that excludes everything else. It empties life of its contents and leaves men restless, dissatisfied, bored. For such reasons I find it difficult to believe that this is Mr. Belloc's final and considered judgement. He subscribes to the principle that spiritual values should come first; and surely there is no single thing that tends to thrust them into a secondary place and crowd them out of life so much as the automobile.

Closely allied to the question of road transport is the question of mass production, for the possibility of road transport being operated in small units, and therefore by small men, depends, among other things, upon the production of automobiles at a price which will bring them within the reach of small men; and this is impossible except by the methods of mass production which conflict with the claims of economic freedom. There is in my opinion no doubt that such is the case, and Mr. Belloc tells us that Capitalists and Communists are also agreed that such is the case. But Mr. Belloc is of a different opinion. He denies there is any conflict between freedom and abundance, maintaining that it is an illusion born of capitalism. "It is", he says, "an illusion which arises from the fact that the men who cherish it have so lived under a capitalist system all their lives that they can conceive of no alternative save a further development of it into Communism." But that is not entirely true. It is not true of Ruskin, for instance; it is not true of me, and it is not true of the thousands, I might say millions, of people who are neither capitalists nor communists, whose eyes have in recent years been opened to the evils and perils of mechanized labor. The awakening of the public to this peril is for me the one hopeful sign in the present situation. Where there was one person who was alive to the peril five years ago there are a hundred today, so great is the change that has taken place. I am surprised that it should have escaped Mr. Belloc's attention.

I do not believe there is the remotest chance of the social problem's being solved until we do face the problem of machinery. There is certainly no prospect of the restoration of the property, and this for a most obvious reason. Under mechanical production the many are inevitably at the mercy of the few, and the few will be slave-drivers who will rob the many and prevent any redistribution of property. Thus the gospel of abundance defeats its own ends. The people will never share in the abundance, because in the process they are deprived of liberty, and so can put up no effective resistance to exploitation. Distributists should not join in the demand for abundance, but should preach the gospel of sufficiency along with their gospel of liberty, for only in the better mental atmosphere which would thus come to prevail could property be restored. So long as the public mind is obsessed with the gospel of abundance, craftsmen will be regarded as anachronisms and be given scant support. The gospel of sufficiency would restore the mental balance which the pursuit of abundance destroys. It would restore to the modern mind a sense of proportion, which is to restore sanity.

Nobody understood better the nature of the conflict between mass production and economic freedom than Marx, and it is not necessary to be a Communist to appreciate what he said. In *Capital* (pp. 660-1 of the Moore-Aveling translation) we find:

> Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into hated toil; they estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labor-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor-process to a despotism the more

hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of Capital.

That to me is the Servile State; the absence of property is only one aspect of it, and not the most important aspect of it, either. The terrible thing about this system of production is that it separates a man from the influences of religion, art and nature, as well as from normal family life. Working under it, a man comes to lose all sense of spiritual realities, of his own personality, until finally his image is no longer the image of God, but of the machine. He comes to live for revenge.

When I first read that passage of Marx it took my breath away. Before I read it I had assumed that Marx was one of those mechanically minded people who are blind to the human degradation involved in mass production. But apparently it was not so. His words, which might have been written by Ruskin, testify to the fact that he was fully alive to the dehumanizing and despiritualizing effects of this system of production. Yet instead of facing the situation as a clear issue between right and wrong, and demanding the abolition of the iniquity as Ruskin did, he exploited it in the interests of revolution. He saw that it could be used to foment class hatred, and, as he had persuaded himself that class warfare was the dynamic law of history, he came to acquiesce in it as a necessary stage in social and economic development.

On this issue the world has to choose between Ruskin and Marx. It repudiated Ruskin and is surprised to find itself in the arms of Marx. Yet this was the natural consequence of the repudiation; for there is finally no possibility of escaping from Marx except by accepting approximately the position of Ruskin:* because both systems of thought have their roots in fundamentally different attitudes towards machinery and mass production. One is the exact antithesis of the other. There is no third position such as Mr. Belloc suggests, or at any rate no third position that leads anywhere. Either we demand the abolition of mass production and a restriction of the use of machinery in order to preserve the integrity of social traditions, in behalf of what we are accustomed to regard as the permanent interests of human nature, or we accept the fact that mass production and unrestricted machinery are disintegrating our traditions and seek social salvation in some new form of society that shall accord with the machine.

Experience suggests it is a barren quest. Intellectual sterility and political impotence overtake all movements that surrender to the machine, unless they are prepared, like the Bolsheviks, to carry their surrender to its logical and inhuman conclusion, for to surrender to the machine is to cut oneself off from the great human stream of tradition and achievement.

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* I say a position approximately that of Ruskin, because Ruskin was guilty of so many contradictions that it is only in a general sense that Ruskin may be said to have had a position at all. In *Unto This Last* he completely demolished the so-called Classical political economy of Adam Smith and his followers; and then proceeded to make nonsense of his book by adding a footnote affirming his belief in Free Trade. It was just as absurd as it would be for a man to disprove the theory of Marx, and then affirm his belief in Marxian Communism. Also Ruskin advocates a revival of Guilds, but will not allow them to be privileged bodies; though of what use Guilds could be without privileges I do not know. It is like a man affirming his belief in law whilst objecting to the only means by which it could be enforced.

There can be no compromise once the issues are clearly understood. The only possible policy to adopt is that of deliberately reversing the economic tendencies of the age, which Mr. Belloc advocates in connection with the restoration of property, but which, without a restriction of the use of machinery, is entirely meaningless; for the economic tendencies of the age are in the main the consequence of the unrestricted use of machinery. The first step in this reversal will be taken when we repudiate the premise of Adam Smith – that the aim of economic activity should be the indefinite increase of wealth – for it is at the root of the mischief. The gospel of abundance, as I have said, defeats its own ends. The day is long past when it led to an actual increase of wealth. What it results in today is an increase of competitive waste, where it does not result in an increase of armaments; for this rearmament business is at the bottom economic and the consequence of over-production. It was in the nature of things that the gospel of abundance should produce such results, for when men become unduly concentrated on increasing production they become mentally unbalanced, blind to wider social and economic issues.

Because of this, in a society given over to maximum production, there can be no central directing power to co-ordinate the activities of industry, because it breeds a spirit which refuses to subordinate itself to the interests of the community. Such a society involves specialization, and specialization results in everybody's becoming a bit abnormal. The directing class loses touch with reality; it gets so far removed from the life of average men that it no longer knows what is happening. It no longer leads but waits on events; it becomes a part of the disease.

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It is the opinion of Mr. Belloc that the modern world moves towards the Servile State, which he defines as a form of society in which "the means of production are controlled by a minority", and the vast mass, dispossessed and dependent upon them, "are kept alive by exploiting them at a wage, and when they cannot do this still keep them alive in idleness by some small subsidy". I have two objections to this position. The first is that we are no longer moving towards the Servile State, but have arrived there; the second is Mr. Belloc's assumption that such a State can be stabilized, if not permanently, at any rate for a considerable time.*

* *Note by the Editor.*—In this passage Mr. Belloc's position is not quite accurately represented. He has customarily used the word "servile" in the literal sense of "characterized by slavery": by the social institution in which the mass of working men are legally and forcibly obliged to work the society's productive property, whether for individual owners or for a small group owning the productive property in the name of the "state". The thesis of Mr. Belloc's great book *The Servile State* is that the increasing restriction in the number of owners that is characteristic of capitalism can only lead, if carried much further, to the revival of the institution of slavery; in other words, to the servile state. He offers evidence, in certain modern legislation, that the first steps in this creation of a servile or slave class have already been taken, but does not hold that the process has reached its full development. Mr. Penty's use of the word "servile" is consequently somewhat different from Mr. Belloc's.

In the light of this Mr. Penty's two obections to what he defines as Mr. Belloc's position need restatement. The first objection becomes purely verbal, based on the two uses of the word "servile". The second objection raises more complex questions which do not need to be gone into here, except to say that it seems to

Now I very much doubt the possibility of stabilizing modern civilization, which I have equated with the Servile State, because it is abnormal; and it is a belief of mine that you cannot stabilize the abnormal. Only the normal can be stabilized. A normal society would be one in which its people shared a common life; they would be held together by personal and human ties, in the family, the parish, guild, town and village rather than by the impersonal activity of the State. Prices, wages and rents would be fixed at a just level, small-scale industry would obtain, the use of machinery would be regulated, property more or less evenly distributed. Such a society would live within its income, and have nothing to do with loans internal or external. Its manufactures would rest on a foundation of agriculture and home-produced raw material, and its commerce on a foundation of native manufactures; while foreign trade would be limited to an exchange of goods against goods, an exchange of surpluses and of such things as could not be produced at home; in a word, it would aim at national self-

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overlook the fact — which Mr. Belloc dwells on in *The Servile State* — that states based on slavery have in the past frequently become stabilized and had long lives. If it was Mr. Penty's contention (as is rather strongly suggested by the paragraphs that follow), that a servile state based on mass production and foreign trade could not be stabilized, this would seem to require changes in the present wording. There is also a question whether "normal," as he proceeds to use it, does not really mean "desirable."

This point and some others in Mr. Penty's article — for one, the apparent contradiction in the emphasis he places on the problem of money in the middle of his article and at the end — were to be taken up with Mr. Penty, in case he desired to make any modifications in his wording. But Mr. Penty died before his wishes could be learned, on January 19.

sufficiency.* But it would be no more than an aim, for it is an ideal that can never be entirely attained in practice, except under the most primitive conditions. Nevertheless it is an ideal to be followed as far as possible, since if such principles are disregarded society will become economically and psychologically unstable; the social pyramid will come to rest on its apex instead of four-square upon its base.

A nation that is excessively dependent upon foreign trade and imported foodstuffs becomes economically unstable, because it finds itself at the mercy of forces it cannot control; it tends to be psychologically unstable, because in so far as cosmopolitanism replaces local life people become uprooted. Once they are uprooted they begin to find themselves at loose ends, which in turn undermines their moral and intellectual integrity; because on the one hand they feel themselves released from social obligations, and on the other because they have no background of real experience to test the validity of ideas.

In the past the danger of cosmopolitanism was recognized. Aristotle and Aquinas each desired to restrict foreign trade within the narrowest limits, because of the economic confusion and moral degeneration which they recognized followed in its wake. But capitalists as a body are entirely blind to its perils. All they can see is their immediate interests. They built up their positions by pursuing their immediate aims to the exclusion of everything else, and they see no reason why they should not continue to pursue them to the end, for they are entirely devoid of vision, while their impulse is purely destructive. There are, I am aware, exceptions. There are among capitalists men of cultural interests and intellectual attainments. But they are too few to change the current. Some day, as a result of the activities of their short-sighted brethren, the inverted pyramid will come toppling over, and capitalists will never know why it happened; unless in the meantime a new spirit with a new technique can be made to prevail.

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* The principle of self-sufficiency needs to be qualified in connection with agriculture, for a country which aims at producing exactly the amount of food it requires will be liable to famine in the event of a failure of crops. It is better therefore that some countries should produce more food than they require and others somewhat less (say 80 to 90 per cent) in order to keep in existence machinery of exchange which can be expanded in times of emergency.

Meanwhile industrialism is perplexed by internal contradictions. The growth of automatic machinery and mass production, by displacing labor, undermines purchasing power, the widespread distribution of which is a condition of the continuance of the system; it threatens to bring industry to a standstill. The Douglas Scheme professes to have found a remedy for this problem in a free distribution of purchasing power, sufficient to equate consumption with production. But such a free distribution of purchasing power could only be applied – apart from the question whether it is desirable – within the limits of a nation on the assumption that it is self-sufficient; otherwise it would lead to national insolvency. Universally it is impracticable. In England, therefore, it would have to be preceded by the revival of agriculture; in Alberta it should be preceded by the promotion of mixed farming and native industries. But bankers, food importers, shippers and shipbuilders in England are opposed to a revival of agriculture because importing food is the only way of collecting interest on foreign loans and investments. And so nothing gets done; we drift and drift.

Industrialism is involved in contradictions in all directions. Contradictions unless resolved can only end in catastrophe. And they cannot be resolved on the financial plane, the only plane about which bankers and industrialists know anything. It all comes finally to putting means before ends. Thinking of means and never of ends, they end in contradictions. The only remedy for this is to exalt ends and subordinate means to them. But capitalists cannot do this, for their minds move in too narrow a groove. Ends are connected with religion and art, two things about which they know nothing. And because of this ignorance they are incapable of taking the measures necessary to stabilize society; from which considerations it would appear that the Servile State can only be a phase that will pass.

Two Essays

G. K. CHESTERTON

The Huxley Heritage

WHEN I saw that somebody had written a book on Mr. Aldous Huxley, there flashed across me the memory of a text of Scripture; such a text as has often struck me as curiously precise considered as a prophecy of certain modern things. Let there be no natural movement of panic or alarm. I have not found Mr. Huxley in the Book of Revelations, disguised as the star that turned all the waters into wormwood; I am not often mistaken for the man who thinks Mussolini is the Little Horn; I fancy he would make sure that his own horn was more exalted; I do not want to prove that Bolshevism is the Beast; I dislike Bolshevism but I know at least three things more beastly; I am blind even to so obvious an occasion as that of identifying the Red Peril with the Scarlet Woman. I only mean that there does happen to be a phrase in the Bible which is unique in describing the interesting position of a very interesting man. I admire him very much; I do not regard him as immediate evidence of the world's end; though I do think there is something in what I once said of his philosophy; that he is a wit at his wits' end. Few would actually identify Huxley with Holy Scripture, except perhaps in a certain frankness of speech; and indeed I remember a race of grim old atheists in Fleet Street who disclosed an unsuspected delicacy, by blushing in public every week over the blasphemous indecorum of the Hebrew Scriptures. But my own association of ideas is more particular and, it might appear, accidental. Anyhow, the whole historical position of Mr. Huxley strikes me as summed up with strange exactitude in this one sentence: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes; and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Mr. Huxley's grandfather was a great man; I was going to say that he had a great grandfather, when I suddenly foresaw that the printers would make a hash of it with a hyphen. He invented Agnosticism, as a name if not a thing; he had a strong English style and a stoical sincerity less firm in the other agnostics. But to some extent Huxley, and much more Herbert Spencer, and infinitely more the infinite army of agnostics, had something I can only call a desperate decency. In the matter of sour grapes, their action was the exact reverse of that of the fox in the fable. The fox said that the sweet grapes he could not get were sour. The agnostic said that the sour grapes he could get were sweet. All that Victorian generation of scientific sceptics assured us again and again that science satisfied them, that scientific ethics would be strictly ethical, that the world had not really lost anything in losing its creeds. They were assuring us, because they were assuring themselves. Old Huxley faced the facts better than most; but about certain social developments he went with the rest. They ate sour grapes; but they would not say they were sour.

And now returning to my text (as the preacher would say) can anybody find a finer or more exact choice of words, in the whole dictionary, for describing the whole generation of critics like Mr. Aldous Huxley, than saying that their teeth are set on edge? I have all possible respect for Mr. Huxley's teeth; I willingly and warmly admit that they mostly bite people who ought to be bitten; I have even greater respect for his eyes and ears and brains. But nobody who appreciates them, nobody who really admires them, will deny that they are all on edge. He seems to me to have come to the edge of everything; and that is what I meant by saying that his wit was at its wits' end. But it is true, even in the sacred sense of science; true even if we invoke the new sacred name of psychology. It is true very largely of the whole generation of which he is the most vivacious representative. There was an age of Puritan morality in which men got things on their conscience. There was an age of Utopian idealism in which men got things on the brain. We are living in a new world, in which men get things on their nerves.

In the distance between us and Dickens, what I note chiefly is the loss of gusto and the growth of disgust. It has nothing to do with any arguments *de gustibus* or about what things are really disgusting. Dickens described people as merely disgusting; but he was not merely disgusted. He made people out more monstrous than they really were; and then enjoyed the monstrosities. But this new school of caricature describes normal people as they normally are; and then reacts against them with an abnormal irritation. The old satire dealt with something that stood out in a startling manner, like the red nose of Mr. Stiggins; but the new satire is suddenly irritated with an ordinary nose, if it happens to have a pimple on it, or even happens to have a fly on it. The children's teeth are on edge; and sometimes even the noise of the human voice sounds to them like the screech of a pencil on a slate.

It were vain to pretend that my explanation is not provocative or controversial. I think this unnatural nervous condition is due to the fact that our fathers or grandfathers refused to recognize a fact; that the supernatural is natural, in the sense of normal. They tried to keep their morality and lose their religion; they tried to pretend that it made no difference to abandon the whole idea of a purpose in things; and the result has been that their descendants are living at a strain, even more painful than theirs. A man who has a morality and has not a religion is like a man permanently standing on one leg. It can be done; but after a century or so it begins to get on the nerves. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes; and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Euthanasia and Murder

THERE is no law against a man biting off his own nose, unless it be a law of nature; nor even any police regulation against his hanging himself up by the hair or whiskers to talk to his friends and family in greater discomfort. There are penalties for suicide but, though I have no suicidal habits myself, I fancy they must be rather hard to apply; since they could only be sharpened into the legal and logical paradox of hanging a man to cure him of wanting to be hanged. But I do not believe that the Code Napoleon has any definite penalty for anybody who chooses to stick pins in himself or stand on one leg all day; and I am credibly informed that the Forty-seven Principles of the Emperor Hi Lo failed to provide anything like practical and well-proportioned punishment for a person who has already drowned himself in boiling oil. Thus do we journalists provide the public with priceless tabloid information about the systems of every land and country. But I have another and more subtle or treacherous reason for mentioning this general truth in this place.

It will be seen that the majestic legislative mind of man does not commonly concentrate specially on forbidding things that nobody would normally want to do. Most probably, there never would have been any laws at all, except against things that men do quite naturally and even passionately want to do. Men punished murder precisely because there are such a large number of persons whom it would seem quite natural, and almost necessary, to murder. Men forbade theft because it is so utterly obvious that any fool could see it, that some property is in the wrong hands, and that anybody might think it would be better applied in his own hands; any fool could see it, any fool could say it, and the law was made because any fool might do it. There was a third commandment, against stealing not only our neighbor's ass, but our neighbor's wife, on which it would now be indelicate to dwell, because all the fools have done it.

Now about this, the Modern Mind has passed through two stages, and I do not know which is worse; for the Modern Mind is rather a weak mind. In the nineteenth century, roughly speaking, all respectable people seemed to suppose that nobody could be tempted to murder or theft or adultery, if he was really respectable. They thought these temptations only came to a curious remote tribe of monsters, called the Criminal Class. From this arose the whole horrible humbug that is called Criminology. Quacks like Lombroso seemed to suppose that no man had ever wanted to push another man's face in, unless his own facial angle was of so many degrees; or that a hungry man could not possibly want to have a finger in anybody else's pie, unless the intrusive finger was accompanied with an abnormal formation of the thumb. We were solemnly told that every criminal must be a lunatic; when in fact there is hardly a healthy or sane man who gets through forty-eight hours without some temptation to commit some such crime.

Then suddenly the Modern Mind discovered this and (not being a very strong mind) instantly slumped into the opposite extreme. Like most moderately intelligent people, I read detective stories in preference to modern novels; but even in detective stories I find this queer rudimentary reason creeping up. Even in crime stories there is now some comprehension of crime; that is, of the fact that we are all criminals. And now the whole weakness is working the other way; many recent murder stories are actually justifications of murder. The moment a refined respectable gentleman realizes that he might want to kill somebody, he jumps to the conclusion that this person ought to be killed. The fact that Aunt Jane is obviously a nuisance, that Uncle William is becoming a terrible bore, that Cousin Hildebrand stands between us and the really sensible family solution, is beginning to look more and more like a real reason for doing them in. That is why, in my own country, some are proposing what is called Euthanasia; at present only a proposal for killing those who are a nuisance to themselves; but soon to be applied progressively to those who are a nuisance to other people. As it applies by hypothesis to an almost moribund or partially paralyzed person, the decision will presumably rest with the other people.

It all began, of course, with stealing our neighbor's wife as well as his ass; because she was more of an ass than the ass. If we want to know how this allowance for exception ruins or replaces the rule, the best example is divorce. Those who first urged it, urged it quite honestly as an extreme exception. They did really mean to apply it only to somebody married to a homicidal maniac. It has come to mean that a leading literary man told me on a platform in New York that no man could remain married to a woman who said, "Right-O". I thought he might have avoided being married to a woman who said, "Right-O". It has come to the point when a man advertises his desire to be divorced from a woman, only he has forgotten her name. How jolly it will be when the sanctity of human life has reached the same stage as the sanctity of marriage! When men do not even remember whom they have murdered, as this gentleman could not remember whom he had married. Is it not time we reasserted the principle, known to primitive man, that the things we desire to do are the things we may be restrained in doing; and it is because we are all criminals that we had better be discouraged from crime?

REVIEWS

Ernest Seillière and Irving Babbitt*

THE TWO most profound and searching analysts of the Romantic movement have been respectively a Frenchman and an American: Ernest Seillière and the late Irving Babbitt. Despite the great similarity of their works, they have been little considered together (with the noteworthy exception of Louis J. A. Mercier's *The Challenge of Humanism*). The appearance of Folke Leander's *Humanism and Naturalism: A Comparative Study of Ernest Seillière, Irving Babbitt, and Paul Elmer More*, a book written by a Swede and published in admirable English in Sweden, is a heartening sign of the continued international growth of anti-Romantic criticism, as well as evidence of this new author's insight and abilities. Professor Babbitt himself pointed out the similarities, on the "negative" side, between his own criticism of Romanticism and Baron Seillière's, though he diverged sharply from the Frenchman in his prescription for the Romantic malady; to Babbitt's way of thinking, Seillière was only trying to cure the disease with a more subtle form of it, opposing Stoicism, or undue faith in reason, to naturalistic emotionalism. But in their opposition to naturalistic emotionalism, and in their tracing of the endless forms it has taken during the last two hundred years, these critics are in entire agreement, and the numerous detailed studies contained in Baron Seillière's more than sixty impressive volumes confirm and supplement in the most striking fashion the general ideas and illustrations expressed in Professor Babbitt's more restricted output.

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* HUMANISM AND NATURALISM, *by Folke Leander* (ELANDERS BOKTRYCKERI AKTIEBOLAG, GOTTENBURG. 227 pp.)

Babbitt's whole system, indeed, is in a sense less "general" than Seillière's: it is based on a few concrete observations, "the immediate data of consciousness", and, beyond its common-sense view of man, involves no metaphysic. Seillière's system, on the other hand, is rather more elaborate and has speculative tendencies, though confining itself on the whole to particular instances. Both agree, as has been said, in seeing modern thought as being dominated by naturalism — which is simply an optimistic view of Nature unwarranted by experience. According to Babbitt, this view followed on — or in turn promoted, as the case might be — a surrender to the impulses of the expansive self; according to Seillière, it is an outgrowth of "irrational imperialism". In Baron Seillière's terminology, imperialism equates with the will to power; it is, Mr. Leander quotes him as saying, "in reality nothing but a corollary of the instinct towards preservation which has at all times been found to exist in nature, the latter instinct soon being taught by experience that whenever power over things is acquired the chances of survival of the living being . . . are augmented".

Imperialism almost at once manifests itself in conjunction with a *mysticisme d'alliance*; that is, the imperialistic urge is held to be on the side of a divine power; the imperialist claims a godly ally. This, of course, is much the same thing as the various subrational parodies of religion which Professor Babbitt found current everywhere in Romanticism. This divine power, from the middle of the eighteenth century onward, is located in Nature, in which it is revealed through feeling, or impulse. Now such revelation is usually made through some specific form of feeling, which is in itself deified: Seillière classifies the esthetic, the erotic, the social, and the national as the four main forms of "naturistic mysticism" rebellious against every type of "conventional" and "artificial" restraint. How many cults and movements they have generated, and how active they are in the world at this very moment, should be evident to anyone who has looked on recent history with a critical eye.

Imperialism in itself, Seillière maintains, is not reprehensible; it is only to be curbed by reason and experience and it will result in good, and, he thinks, it has been working throughout time, despite many setbacks and mistakes, to carry man on to a higher goal. It will be evident that Baron Seillière is himself something of a "mystic" of reason; and he admits this, though not before warning us against those who place exclusive faith in reason unchecked by experience. He is, finally, a humanitarian, believing in human progress in the mass under the guidance of reason and the ever-increasing knowledge supplied by science; and so, as Professor Babbitt said, he is on the side of those who would save mankind in the lump as against those who, like Babbitt, would save the individual man. For Seillière, though a brilliant critic of all the aberrations of naturalism, does not divorce himself entirely from the naturalistic viewpoint; Babbitt, on the contrary, insisting on the primacy of the higher will in any specifically human activity, stood completely opposed to all forms of naturalism, whether intellectual or emotional, and pointed to a distinction, the blurring of which everywhere confounds the modern world's effort to right itself. This failure to distinguish sharply enough between the natural and the human order must be counted a central defect in Baron Seillière's work, but it by no means vitiates the worth of one of the most searching as well as extensive critiques of the whole Romantic heresy, ranging in subject from the pastoral novels of the early Renaissance to the abdominal intuitions of D. H. Lawrence.

In examining Seillière's philosophy, Mr. Leander brings out clearly the agreement between his subject and the American humanists in condemning naturistic mysticism. In the course of doing this he reviews the thought of Ludwig Klages, a German who seems to have combined the Teutonic eccentricity and thoroughness in propounding a philosophy of primitivism that looks back to a Golden Age far more oriferous than any eighteenth-century *philosophe* ever dreamed of. As Herr Klages sees it, before the intellect began to meddle in things and *Weltschaffenden Webekraft allverbindener Liebe* ruled, and was, the world, man had only to wish a thing for it to be so, and fairyland was a sweet reality. Against this world Mr. Leander contrasts Baron Seillière's utilitarian one, and brings out clearly its affinities to the world envisaged by the English utilitarians of the 17th and 19th centuries — an intellectual genealogy ascribed to Seillière by Babbitt in *Democracy and Leadership*. Having established this variance between the thought of Seillière and Babbitt and More (Dr. More necessarily plays a subsidiary rôle in the volume, since his main work has been in propounding a philosophy of religion and establishing the historical fulfillment contained in Christianity, though his insistence upon a practical dualism is a cardinal point of Babbitt's doctrine and many of his critical studies are closely related), Mr. Leander goes on to examine the humanistic philosophy of the will, wherein the superiority of Babbitt over Seillière is most conspicuous. Here his exposition covers ground that will be familiar to American readers, though his approach is not without originality.

Mr. Leander turns to various experimental psychologists and certain introspective ones – of whom it is doubtful that Babbitt would have been very approving – to establish the will as a primary fact given by the consciousness. The existence of the will was not something that Professor Babbitt ever argued directly; he merely pointed out what happened upon abandoning belief in it and with rare common sense showed that determinism involved metaphysical concepts of fantastic elaborateness when compared to the belief in volition. Nor was his concept of the higher will anything so difficult as his ignorant opponents sought to make it appear: it was merely the quality of will felt as capable of checking the will manifested by the expansive self – the will, in short, that had always given man the best in civilization and his own happiness. It was the assertion of this "inner check" (in Dr. More's phrase), a plain fact of human nature, that called down upon Professor Babbitt while he lived the denunciation of numerous esthetic sophists, jitney reviewers, and hack purveyors of "culture" – a spectacle whose stupidity occasions Mr. Leander some well-bred surprise. It is rather amusing, therefore, to find Mr. Leander summoning to Babbitt's defense the conclusions of Renouvier, James, Janet, Francis Aveling, and Narziss Ach, all of whom have or deserve places in the pantheon of Babbitt's old abominations.

The relation of Babbitt's ideas on the will to religious grace and humility Mr. Leander treats at some length, and here he becomes involved in difficulties which seem purely verbal – such as one is more used to encountering in Ph.D. theses than in works undertaken out of genuine interest – though in the end he resolves them satisfactorily enough. He concludes that the doctrines of grace and of the higher will are not incompatible: they represent facts of human experience on different planes, the humanistic and the religious, and though to accept the validity of both the higher will and grace is "ambivalent", it is not necessarily inconsistent. In the same way, faith in will does not conflict with humility, and a true understanding of the nature of the former can only help to induce a strong sense of the latter. These matters lead Mr. Leander to consider the primacy Babbitt accorded will over intellect, and he has some interesting suggestions to make as to the possibilities of growth in knowledge once the epistemological problem is looked upon as fundamentally one of will. Whatever the procedure of Western philosophy in this matter, orthodox Christianity has always made right knowing a matter of right willing, and the gulf the author points to between East and West has in practice hardly been so wide as he suggests.

But Mr. Leander offers a book with which, I think, one can pick no radical quarrel: he is deeply and [illegible] read in his sources and his interpretations of them are both sympathetic and just. At a time when American literature is taken abroad as best represented by the muddled newspaper platitudes of Sinclair Lewis or the familiar leftist-international shallowness of John Dos Passos, it is cheering to find our two greatest writers seriously considered and thoroughly understood. Mr. Leander forms a link in that true internationalism of the mind, which is not a noisy formula to conceal the absence of any genuine intellectual application, but is an appreciation of the universality of all profound and candid thinking and so the means by which men of good will can come together in truth and the fullness of their humanity.

JAMES L. DEVITT

"None Shall Look Back"*

RESOUNDING praise for the ordinary fictional article of commerce is so much the order of the day that when a novel appears which truly demands praise, the task of reviewing it presents special difficulty. Words worn threadbare in the service of mediocrity look appallingly perfunctory when returned to their intended uses. Miss Caroline Gordon, in her latest novel, has written a book which commands the best the reviewer has to offer. It is shapely, it has vitality, it illuminates a major aspect of American life, it is written in a style so perfectly suited to its matter that it goes straight to that heaven of all true lovers of style: although during the reading of the book one feels a constant quiet reassurance running so deep that it rarely emerges into conscious appreciation; it is overlooked, and only seen in retrospect for the remarkable literary feat that it really is.

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* NONE SHALL LOOK BACK *by Caroline Gordon* (SCRIBNER'S. [illegible]8 pp. $2.75)

It must have been singularly hard to make *None Shall Look Back* a shapely book. Its story is the relation of a Kentucky family to the Civil War, seen for the most part through the eyes of one of Nathaniel Bedford Forrest's scouts, Rives Allard. In the little period that the book covers, Rives grows out of adolescence into manhood, loves, marries, fights, becomes aware of the issues around him with growing clarity; is killed. We have often had thousands of words attempting to perform merely the feat of showing the emergence from adolescence of one character, in situations uncomplicated by such issues as warfare and the dissolution of not only a family but a whole society; yet most of such narratives have succeeded less fully than this rich book, in which the personal drama must take its place in a larger scheme.

That Miss Gordon must have immersed herself in the documents of her period goes without saying; but her book never gives one the feeling that it was written with works of reference open at her elbow. What she has needed she has taken and absorbed so deeply into her imagination that it comes back to the reader rounded, softened, intensified as are all details upon which the imagination has been able to brood. The most factual scenes in this book have the same "color" — if it is fair to use such a metaphor — as those which are the work of Miss Gordon the fiction-writer. There is hence none of the unevenness of the usual historical novel, and from this adroit blending of elements arises the illumination which this novel's reading affords.

For this novel is truly illuminating. It is possible to have come a long way from the old school-room picture of the Northern army as a host of crusading angels who met and vanquished the children of darkness on the battlefields of the Civil War; it is possible to have seen through the crude ardors aroused by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and to recognize the errors of even the best of the abolitionists; it is even possible to reach the point of understanding the grave wrong that was done the South when her right of secession was denied, and brutally denied her; and yet to remain in a state of unimaginative ignorance of the South yesterday and today. In reading Miss Gordon's book this ignorance is, in part, at least, dispelled. Without in any way stressing the point, she shows so vividly and well the Southern agrarian culture, its distinctness and its homogeneity, that the South of our land takes on in the mind the full and separate life that is its nature.

That it was Miss Gordon's intention to have her book produce any such effect on a Northern reader I very much doubt; any more, I imagine, than it was Mr. Andrew Lytle's intention, when he told in *The Long Night* the episode of the man who lost his plantation and all his slaves at a game of marbles, to emphasize a difference in the cultures and customs of the North and the South. In both books the primary intention is much deeper and more vital; but it is an added excellence in a book when it can by being true to its original design, and without descending into the raucousness and implausibility of most propaganda, bring such illumination to its readers.

The story of *None Shall Look Back* does not suffer because it carries this "social" effect. Rather it takes its own way. Miss Gordon opens upon the last gathering of a Kentucky family before its dissolution by the war, but, although she follows the activities of her scout in Bedford's company, Rives Allard, through most of her pages, Rives's story as an individual is only one thread of her vast fabric. Not the dissolution of the family, nor the tale of Rives's perils and death, not his love of Lucy nor their marriage in the midst of war; not Kentucky's role in the war; not even the tragic dilatoriness of Bragg, which threw away Southern victory when it was within the South's grasp; not even the heroic figure of Forrest is the main story she has to tell. All these things are woven into a texture so rich and smooth that to follow any one line for comment and praise would be to single out a thread of a tapestry for its unique importance.

And by some enchantment Miss Gordon has done all this, has "fetched up" the past for us till she seems to have conjured up a little world with space and time unwarped within it, where her characters move, meet, cross and pass as they might if that world of seventy years ago in the western South were our world of today and here, in a prose beyond praise. The phrase "by some enchantment" seems perfectly just. It is possible to know a great deal of what is called, for lack of a better phrase, "the technique of fiction" – most of the ways, subtle or obvious, in which a writer may move to make his story circumstantial – without being able to discover in *None Shall Look Back* these shifts and expedients of the novelist. How Miss Gordon achieves the peculiarly living atmosphere of her work eludes this reviewer. Her style moves with her story so unobtrusively, so rightly, that it is only by an effort that one realizes that here *is* a style, and of extraordinary beauty. It is undoubtedly that suitability of every sentence to what it is meant to convey that is the secret of Miss Gordon's effect. Undoubtedly. But it remains her secret.

DOROTHEA BRANDE COLLINS

"Logical Positivism"*

AT LAST we are offered a clear statement of the doctrines of the logical positivists. Mr. Ayer, a research student at Christ Church, Oxford, sets forth his philosophical *credo*. He tells us that, while his viewpoint has been primarily determined by the teachings of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, the modern thinkers with whom he is in closest agreement are Moritz Schlick and Carnap of Vienna. He is thus the heir of the world-wide reaction against Idealism which startled our modern thinkers at the turn of the century.

It was in Germany, the cradle of Idealism, that the movement began. Husserl and Meinong were the leaders of the revolt. A couple of years later G. E. Moore published his famous *Mind* article, "The Refutation of Idealism". Moore was soon joined by Bertrand Russell who, during the next ten years, made several stirring pleas for the realistic position. In the same year (1903) as Moore's article appeared in Eng-

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*LANGUAGE TRUTH AND LOGIC *by Alfred J. Ayer* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 254 pp. $3.00) land, the tocsin was sounded in America when Frederick Woodbridge delivered the presidential address before the Western Philosophical Association. Six years later the Woodbridge challenge achieved its purpose when, at New Haven, a number of the younger members of the American Philosophical Association renounced the basic tenets of the Idealism which had long held the field in this country. Those crusaders for realistic thought were Perry, Montague, Holt, Marvin, Pitkin, and Spaulding. They held that the mind apprehends, but does not constitute, reality; that our knowledge is nothing but a given-ness; and that the only logical approach to the problem of knowledge is along the line of analysis. The latest offshoot of the movement to which those American Neo-Realists belonged is the Logical Positivism professed by the author of this book.

As a positivist, Mr. Ayer naturally begins by an attack on the metaphysical thesis that philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense. His line of argument is clearly indicated:

> We shall maintain that no statement which refers to a "reality" transcending the limits of all possible sense-experience can possibly have any literal significance; from which it must follow that the labours of those who have striven to describe such a reality have all been devoted to the production of nonsense.

In other words, his charge against the metaphysician is that he produces sentences which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a sentence can be literally significant. His criterion for the "literally significant" is the criterion of verifiability: a sentence is factually significant to any given person if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition it purports to express. A sentence may be verifiable, he points out, either in practice or in principle; the proposition that there are mountains on the farther side of the moon is not practically verifiable by me, but, as long as I do know what observations would decide it for me if I were in a position to make them, the proposition is verifiable in principle and therefore is literally significant. But no observation could be conceived of, he teaches, which would tell me anything about the Absolute. Therefore pronouncements about the Absolute, not being literally significant, are just nonsense.

Grammar, it seems, is to blame. When we see two sentences of the same grammatical form we are inclined to infer that they are of the same logical type. Thus, *martyrs suffer* is an attributive proposition, while *martyrs exist* is an existential proposition. But our tendency is, we are told, to make them both attributive, and "when we ascribe an attribute to a thing, we covertly assert that it exists". Again, take the propositions *dogs are faithful* and *unicorns are fictitious*. In order to have the property of being faithful, dogs must exist; "so it is held that unless unicorns in some way existed they could not have the property of being fictitious". Thus we have fallen into the habit of postulating what our author calls "real non-existent entities". "As there is no place in the empirical world for these 'entities' a special non-empirical world is invoked to house them." From all of which Mr. Ayer concludes that the problems of metaphysics concerning the reality of propositions and universals are quite senseless.

Having demolished metaphysics, he proceeds to what he calls "the overthrow of speculative philosophy". This proves quite easy for him, since it is axiomatic with him that empiricism can explain everything and that there is "no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give". The speculative philospher is, then, quite useless, but the practical philosopher has a definite function to perform. That function is predominantly analytic; the philosopher must show us why we accept the truth of any given empirical proposition and must also give a correct definition of material things in terms of sensations.

In a brief review it is impossible to unravel all the implications of such thoroughgoing phenomenalism as is set forth in this book. Wherefore, it is enough to indicate that Mr. Ayer, empiricist though he be, accepts the validity of necessary truths, his explanation being that we cannot abandon such truths without contradicting ourselves, "without sinning against the rules which govern our use of language and so making our utterances self-stultifying". Similarly our author gives a phenomenalist evaluation of the self and is at great pains to make out a case for his belief that this does not lead to solipsism. As for ethics, he tells us that a strictly philosophical treatise on ethics should make no ethical pronouncements but should give an analysis of ethical terms. When he comes to the point of offering us a critique of theology he tells us that there can be no way of proving that the existence of a god, even the God of Christianity, is even probable. "It is only when we enquire what God's attributes are that we discover that 'God', in this usage, is not a genuine name."

Against all this it is impossible to offer any detailed criticism. What is to be objected to is not so much the separate theses put forward by Mr. Ayer, as his entire viewpoint. He begins with an analysis of linguistic forms and arrives at an evaluation of a philosopher as one whose task is to clarify the concepts of contemporary science. Aristotle also began with linguistic forms, but he deduced his categories from an analysis of them. Mr. Ayer deals with sense-contents, accepting them as the sole *materia* of our knowledge. Aristotle, too, dealt with sense-contents; but for the Stagirite the sense-content was always dynamic, never static, never a mere cross-section of the psychical stream. Aristotle regarded the sense-content, not as a fixed imprint, but as the beginning of a process of qualitative change which, set up initially in the sense-organ, persists until it reaches the consciousness as a phantasm or image. From the store of phantasms or images accumulated by sense-experience, we draw, by the process known as *abstraction*, our ideas, ideas which represent to us what the thing is, prescinding entirely from its individuality. Finally, our author makes the criterion of truth exclusively extrinsic; a proposition must be, either in fact or in principle, verifiable by the methods of empiricism. Aristotle, on the other hand, saw the ultimate criterion of truth to be intrinsic, because the judgment contains in itself a definite characteristic which is the test of its truth and its validity.

Because of its exaggerated realism, the book offers an illustration of the Olgiati view of modern trends in philosophy. Olgiati holds that the characteristic of modern thinking is its devotion to the concrete, whereas the pre-moderns, from Socrates to Descartes, were interested in the study of reality by means of the abstractive process. Aristotle, in his search and examination of linguistic forms, aimed at the ideas which those forms portrayed and, ultimately, at the knowledge of things in their profound reasons and nature. The logical positivist of to-day believes that he has no need of the abstract; he is content with the concrete, which he studies by empirical methods. It is inevitable, therefore, that he should reach, sooner or later, the conclusion that Mr. Ayer reaches in this book: that the philosopher's task is merely to define the symbols of scientific procedure and that his greatest achievement will be to formulate the logic of science.

But the logical positivist forgets that the human mind is compelled by its very constitution to ask the questions which Western philosophers have been discussing for more than two thousand years, questions which involve the principles, rather than the mere symbols, on which the certainty aimed at by every science in the last resort depends. He also forgets that Man has a natural desire to interpret and to understand the universe in which he lives, to achieve something of the meaning of reality, and to discern life's purpose and value. Since the time of Pythagoras this perennial searching has been called love of wisdom or philosophy. Mr. Ayer tells us that the philosopher must become a scientist — or rather an ancillary scientist — if he is to make any substantial contribution toward the growth of human knowledge. But what is the value of that knowledge if it does not help to answer the questions which vex the hearts of men? Only to return to a sanely comprehensive system of thought can assuage Man's hunger for truth.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

British Propaganda *

THE title of Dr. Maloney's book does not adequately convey its contents and nature. Far from being merely a discussion of one aspect of the case of Roger Casement, or even a general treatment of the career of the Irish patriot who was executed by the British in 1916, *The Forged Casement Diaries* is essentially a study of British propaganda in this country. As such it deals with a theme of unsurpassed importance, especially in days when so many Americans are anxiously debating how this country can avoid being dragged into a second world war, and wondering on what side we should fight if we are forced to participate.

The myth has become prevalent – it lies at the basis of most of the "neutrality" measures currently proposed – that the United States was drawn into the war of 1914-18 by the size of our financial stake in the Allied countries. Taking full account of the great weight this factor played in the ultimate decision, it should be obvious on a moment's reflection that the prior questions, whether we should place our resources at the disposal of one side predominantly, which side, and to what extent, were settled by the prevailing direction of public opinion. In American opinion regarding foreign affairs the most important single influence throughout our history has been, and still remains, British propaganda. For that reason such a detailed and documented case-study as the present book deserves wide attention.

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* THE FORGED CASEMENT DIARIES *by William J. Maloney, M.D., LL.D.* (THE TALBOT PRESS, DUBLIN. 275 pp. 10/6).

As most readers know, Roger Casement was an Irishman who after a distinguished career in the British consular service became prominent in the Irish nationalist movement and at the outbreak of the War went to Germany to enlist aid for the Irish cause. On his secret return to Ireland aboard a German submarine just before the Easter Rising of 1916 he was captured, tried for treason, and hanged. The task which Dr. Maloney set himself was to examine the causes of the opinion generally formed in this country at the time that Casement was a man of despicable character with no qualities to redeem his infamous conduct. As the author says in his Preface:

> For over twenty years this has been our attitude toward Casement. In it some may prefer to continue; and I would not disturb them. But others may like to know how they came to adopt it. We do not naturally assume such an attitude towards any man who dies for his country. True, our tastes in traitor-patriots differ. Certain of us do not like the Irish, while certain others share the passion of Mr. Wickham Steed for the Czeck variety [Masaryk, whose career closely paralleled Casement's, on the other side]. But prejudice even when passionate seldom makes a devil out of a saint. And the loathing of Casement was felt not merely by the racially prejudiced, but by the entire English-speaking world.

That this feeling was prevalent among the officially censored subjects of the British Empire was, after all, scarcely surprising. But it was strange that the British abhorrence of Casement was felt by the American people also, a people whose earliest standard of national virtue was the traitor-patriot to England.

When Americans received their impression of Casement they were at peace, free from official censorship, and actually under a presidential admonition to be neutral even in thought.

Unlike the British, the Americans were turned against Casement not openly but stealthily – so stealthily, in fact, that down to this day some Americans still think their opinion of Casement was free from all foreign taint.

To a generation trying to see the war and its antecedents in perspective, the Casement affair is valuable as a simple example of the art of moulding the neutral mind. It is a concrete instance of a foreign power determining America's attitude in a definitive fashion which has already withstood the changes of twenty years.

In recent affairs of primary import so many influences constrain the minds of America's hundred and thirty million people that the foreign are seldom distinguishable from the domestic forces that confusedly sway the United States to decision and action. But the Casement affair is neither too recent for profitable investigation, nor too remote for remembering; and it can be examined calmly and dispassionately for its American import is now less than secondary. Moreover, there is no lack of material for studying it in the contemporary press of the United States and of England.

Dr. Maloney has made the best possible use of the abundant material available, which besides newspaper references consisted of British government papers, books of war-time recollections, personal statements from individuals concerned, and the documents in the large Casement Collection of the National Library of Ireland. Through all these sources Dr. Maloney pursued his quarry with infinite patience and ingenuity, and has assembled the results in a persuasive narrative that is a model of clarity and unlabored thoroughness. His book has all the fascination of a superb detective story, yet at no point suggests romancing or anything but the hardest and grimmest facts, enlivened from time to time by touches of telling irony.

Dr. Maloney takes up one by one the charges that were used to blacken Casement's name; demonstrates their falsity; and shows by whom they were invented, and how and by whom they were disseminated. The charges against Casement were chiefly along three lines, artfully used according to the circumstances: that he was crazy – had suddenly become irresponsible, possibly from the effects of years spent in the tropics, and yielded to his German infatuation in an aberrant mood; that he was in the pay of the Germans, perhaps had been for years, and was actuated by desire for gain; that he was a sexual pervert of the lowest and most brutal description.

The first two of these lines of attack – as Dr. Maloney calls them, the Story of Casement the Madman and the Story of Casement the German Agent – are easily controverted by clearly demonstrable facts. The third charge – the Story of Casement the Degenerate Diarist – was more elaborate than the others, and provided Dr. Maloney with a more complex job of unraveling. Within a few weeks after Casement's arrest in April, 1916, it began to be rumored that in searching his London rooms the police had found a diary in Casement's handwriting, with references to places he had lived in – especially the Belgian Congo and the Putumayo, Peru, where he had performed his most distinguished services as consular agent – which revealed him as a particularly loathsome sexual pervert. Sample pages of the diary, and copies and photographic reproductions of parts of it – in a few cases, briefly, the whole document – were displayed to "key" people in England and in this country. And with great effect. Even life-long friends and fellow Irish patriots were convinced the document was genuine and turned away from Casement. The result was that the movement for a vigorous world-wide appeal for clemency was severely crippled, and the execution took place with the minimum of protest – and Ireland was in large part deprived of a hero at a time when Irish patriotic heroes were especially embarrassing to Great Britain in her efforts to draw the United States into the war as an ally.

But though the alleged diary was widely displayed on both sides of the water over a period of months, care was always taken that no part of it and no copy of any of it should remain in the hands of those who were designed to be influenced by it. And in the meantime the British Foreign Office has always flatly refused permission to anyone to inspect it. Dr. Maloney is consequently obliged to rely on such descriptions of the diary as have survived in letters, personal recollection, and a few contemporary printed allusions. His very considerable detective powers are here shown at their height. Not only does he demonstrate conclusively that it was impossible for the diary to be other than a forgery, but he is able to trace the central passages to their real source.

But the most valuable part of Dr. Maloney's study lies not in its rehabilitation of the reputation of Roger Casement, but in its circumstantial exhibition of the methods of British propaganda. In spite of the consummate craftiness with which the work was done at the time, and the effectiveness of the Official Secrets Act in preventing later revelations by the participants, Dr. Maloney has succeeded so well in tracing the process whereby lies invented by the British Foreign Office were accepted as news by our newspapers and as truth by the chief opinion-forming centers of the country, that a strikingly clear picture emerges. He is able to give names and dates and places; to show the influence of the Foreign Office over the correspondents of our papers and press-services; to illustrate the role of visiting British celebrities and of the British diplomatic corps in these matters.

The Forged Casement Diaries is a book that all students of public affairs should read. They will miss its lesson, however, if they take it as merely an exposure of one episode in British war-time propaganda or even as merely an example of the methods by which we were led to become an ally of Great Britain in the War. The Casement affair happens to lend itself to documentary treatment in a way that the vast majority of such activities do not; but its exceptional character lies only in this. In a fashion generally more subtly disguised and less easily traceable, the same process went on not only during the war, but also in the years before the war, and has gone on ever since. Until Americans are fully alive to these practices, and are able to recognize and expose them as they occur, we will remain something less than a sovereign people in our most vital decisions. S.C.